



IRELAND'S CAPITAL — DUBLIN
IS ONE OF THE FINEST CITIES
IN IRELAND.



BLARNEY CASTLE DATES FROM
THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY.



THE INESCAPABLE DONKEYS WITH THEIR
TINY CARTS.

IN RURAL IRELAND.



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To Minnie
in memory of the land
our fathers loved
Celia.

HERE'S IRELAND

Christmas 1931.

BOOKS BY
HAROLD SPEAKMAN

HERE'S IRELAND
THIS ABOVE ALL (A NOVEL)
BEYOND SHANGHAI
HILLTOPS IN GALILEE
FROM A SOLDIER'S HEART



THE QUAYS,
WATERFORD

HERE'S IRELAND

by

HAROLD SPEAKMAN




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FOREWORD

Between Joseph Conrad on the *Torrens* and Pierre Loti on the *Redoubtable* there are many degrees of literary latitude. These writers, one may say, have charted the farthest practicable courses into the cold and into the heat.

Others of us who attempt a book beyond our native horizons will do very well, I believe, to give an occasional thought to those earlier explorers. Otherwise—though we sail quite serenely out over the edges of our map—we may shortly lose ourselves in a welter of spouting whales and pale shadows and sexities, becoming engaged from that time forth in a sort of myth of ourselves in which we are the fancy-man of sixteen shiny Nubian ladies, or in which we slaughter one thousand and two terrific Tartars from Thibet every morning before breakfast.

These things are not so bad at their inception, but they must be simply hellish to live up to. What could be more horrid—when you are feeling a bit lily-pale and grippish, with a headache and a cold in the nose—than to have someone come reminding you of the sixteen bulbous Nubian ladies or the one thousand and two bloody Tartars!

Of course to get readers—gentle readers, rough readers, or even proof readers—a writer might be quite willing to “do such,” even in Mr. Kipling’s use of the term.

On the other hand, there is something, which, for want of a better word, is called *integrity*. What it is we hardly know. We recognize it only as a rare and beautiful thing toward which we grope quite blindly, trying to catch some

slight reflection of its depth and richness into our eyes and heart.

Men may be found who will explain with words just what integrity is, particularly, what literary integrity is. But for all that, the best writers of to-day, judged in the light of a thousand years hence, will perhaps have come no nearer to comprehending it than little children who keep pronouncing over and over some old and wise saying which they have heard but which they do not understand.

The great and comforting answer is that all of us—those of low degree as well as of high—may keep on. Certainly for all who write, integrity is a thing to strive for and to fight for, and perhaps, when no one else is about, even to pray for.

But sometimes, on rare and happy occasions, the subject to be written about is so vital, so salutary, and at the same time so colorful that veracity is preserved as naturally as the stamen is held and preserved by the petals of a flower. When furthermore, the subject is one which keeps the tears never very far from the eyes, nor laughter from the lips, nor frowns from the brow, and which keeps the blood of life racing through the arteries, then the writing becomes a benediction and a joy.

It is therefore with a full smile without and a full heart within that I begin putting together these notes on that magnificent, good-natured, angry, laughter-loving, whimsical country called Ireland.

As to the book itself, there will be very few *bedads* and *begobs* and *begorrahs* herein, for there are infinitely fewer in Ireland than some of our romancers would have us believe. When you do find one in these pages, you may give it the full value of its rotundity, for it will be fresh from the

lips of a living man. There is of course, the Irish idiom, varying somewhat throughout the country, and this must be attempted (not however, by marked changes in the spelling such as "th' thrile iv th' haynious murtherer iv his childer" for such a book would not only be a monumental bore, but it would give a false impression of Ireland).

Nearly all the paintings were made "between-showers" as stated on the title page and described in the text, during a journey through the wettest Irish summer in nearly fifty years. The incisive caricatures in black and white, which need no such apology, appear through the generosity of my loyal friend "Mac" of Dublin.

There will be found in this book the opinions of Irishmen of various creeds, classes, localities and traditions. Some of these opinions are exaggerated and distorted, for it is the nature of many people to distort and exaggerate; but it is by the reproduction of these very exaggerations that the picture becomes true. The reader with clear eyes will understand these things.

Here will be found very little politics, so little that someone may perhaps say, "This man has not penetrated to the political values of Ireland." My answer is, that I have tried to penetrate to those values of life which I sincerely believe to lie closer to humanity than political values.

This may be added—that if, in our time of accelerated travel, I started out on my journey with a donkey, it was not through any eccentricity, or any craving for sensation, but simply as the result of a wish to come as near as I could to the land and to the people of the land. I purposely carried no letters of introduction to Ireland, I did not know a soul in the country, north or south; yet in this book will be found many men and women whom one would hardly expect to chance upon with a donkey.

How is this explained? By some particular virtue on the part of the writer? *Dear veritas*—NO! It has nothing to do with the writer at all—or at most, only in this: that he found no appreciable flaw, either high or low, in the fine spirit of Irish hospitality, and that through this same hospitality, and the kindness of Ireland as a whole, he has come by material for laughter and gravity and tears which, (St. Patrick willing) he will fashion into the pages of this book.

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Lady, when the night comes down
Upon the roofs of Dublin town
And stars of far celestial planes
Are chanting in their curvéd lanes—
I wonder how you are
And if your spirit clings to me
That drift and journey far.

Never a night but sings to me—
Knowing well who brings to me
Dear and lovely things to me—
A light . . . a dream . . . a star.

HERE'S IRELAND

CORK

CHAPTER I

As I journeyed along through a fertile and generous countryside, I saw a young woman, dark and lovely and in the full presence of her youth, lying beneath a hedgerow. If there were traces of hardship on her face, and of recent nights in which she had slept little or not at all, she was none the less a woman for that. Indeed, because of these things, there rested upon her a compelling and mysterious beauty before which no man might remain completely at ease.

Now as I passed by, she smiled at me, so I turned back and sat down beside her and gave her good-day. And when she asked who I might be, I told her that I was a man from a wide land beyond the western sea, and that I was looking for a dear dark girl who had got lost during the wars, and that no man in my country had seen her truly for ten years; but that I (being perhaps a fool) had set out to find her with a donkey and cart. And when I had told her, she put her head down under the hedgerow, and laughed, and laughed again, and asked me what I had found.

"It is a long tale," I said.

"If it is a true one, it is hardly long enough," she answered. "Say on!"

So, since there is that in the world beside the strength of a man's arm which can command, I began.

WHEN I came into O'Herrin's Horse Bazaar, Mr. O'Herrin was not there. But an old fellow with a shock of white hair protruding from under his frayed cap, and a pair of the reddest cheeks in all Cork, took his elbows off the topmost bar of the empty horse-pen and said that himself would soon be back.

"I'll wait then," I responded, adding that the weather was bad.

"It is," he said, and went into a profound silence.

So I put my elbows on the bar, slumped over in the approved Corkonian manner, and, shutting out the rain and the horse-pens and the squalid street before me, I lost myself in the memory of other pictures I had seen since the lugger from the *Baltic* had scraped to rest at the Queens-town dock a few hours before.

That old Irish mother waiting beside the custom house, with her queer broken old shoes and shawl, and her streaming, joy-lit face . . .

Those clear, plaintive notes of little maids' voices rising over a school wall: "*Come back to Erin, Mavourneen, Mavourneen . . .*"

That Irish lad from the boat with eyes much too far apart—eyes, however, still capable of pain—a lad who because he was "not quite right" had not been allowed to enter the United States, and was now being sent home again . . .

The pride and tremulous haste of the baggage men in the Queenstown station, wearing themselves to the bone in their attempt to vie with the speed and heartbreak of America . . .

Then counteracting these memories came another—the

memory of a returned, fatted prodigal, holding forth in a raucous trumpet voice to a group of friendly souls who had wished to pledge his health after the custom of the land.

"It's the law in my country," he ranted, "that we must not drink alcoholic liquor. No sir-ee! And if the law says *that*, it means it abroad as well as at home. And I say that a man is not a good citizen of our country if he takes a drink when he is out of that country either." He looked about him like a smug angel about to fasten the fiery sword to the golden gate. Even if he were right, his righteousness made him wrong. One preferred, like Aucassin, to be in hell with better company. I started to move away, but he caught me with terrible eye. "You're an American like myself. Don't you say so too?" he asked in a large, pious voice.

"No," I said with some heat. "I'm just going out for a drink."

2

Now as I leaned over the top bar of the horse-pen beside the little old man, it came to me out of nowhere—but very certainly—that he was embarrassed, and that the reason for his embarrassment was the white collar I was wearing! Just as I was thinking that in a day or two this impediment to true values would be removed, he burst out, "*O'Herrin's in the pub!*" and pointed dynamically to a low building across the street, on the door of which was painted a white horse.

Entering, I found myself in a room so small that my arrival reduced the company it held to the physical status of a squad at drill. The drinks, it seemed, came in through a square hole in the wall. On the lower side of the hole

rested the end of a long bar which extended into a larger room beyond. This small room was like a pillbox at the end of a trench. From here one could enfilade the entire barroom.

Since there was nothing else to do, I took my place in the rear rank of the squad and stood at ease before the bar's end. The personal nature of my business with Mr. O'Herrin—whom I had quickly picked out by his riding breeches and leather leggings—made me proceed with some hesitation. I looked at Mr. O'Herrin. Standing there thoughtfully stroking the foam of a glass of dark porter from his large, black mustache, he seemed the typical international horse dealer—a man of poise and dignity who could pick out the fine points or blemishes of any quadruped and most bipeds at a single glance.

He was not looking at me. The others were not looking at me either. They considered the contents of their glasses, closing their eyes thoughtfully a few times with the pre-occupied, abstracted air of men who revolve their affairs in a broad and leisurely manner. The advent of a foreigner in that out-of-the-way public house, in that out-of-the-way corner of Cork, must have been a matter of certain curiosity—yet none of them showed by the most fleeting glance that I was other than themselves.

"Mr. O'Herrin?"

He removed his hand from his handle-bar mustache.
"The same. That's me."

"May I speak with you a moment?"

We gravely moved apart from the rest to a ridiculous stage privacy two feet distant, and Mr. O'Herrin inclined his head with the gravity of one who is about to give consideration to matters of weight and large import. Knowing

what was to be said, I did not find this comforting in any way.

"Mr. Hennessey spoke about you to me," I remarked, delaying the matter as long as possible.

"Ah yes. Mr. Hennessey on Patrick Street."

And now I *must* speak.

"I—ah—mm—want to buy a donkey."

At the word "donkey" Mr. O'Herrin suddenly smiled—and became Irish! He thawed, he melted. A gentle beam illumined his eye. "Now what the world, might I ask, would you be doing with a donkey?" he inquired heartily.

"It's for a sort of holiday," I answered, "and I want a donkey cart too, for carrying my gear. I may go as far as Galway, or even farther."

He rubbed his chin thoughtfully. "Galway . . . What would you think, now, of a *pony*? A donkey would go very slow indeed, and he *might* break oop. For instance, if you were starting for Galway from Limerick, he might break oop before you would ever get there."

My mind was a little vague as to how a donkey would break oop. I had once seen the driving shaft drop out of an automobile . . . However, Mr. O'Herrin's suggestion created in me a definite though perhaps illogical negative.

"Will a donkey travel as fast as a man can walk?" I inquired.

"He will—now and then."

"Could he be trained to go right along the road without stopping?"

"He might, if he was a good one."

"Then I'm sure it's a donkey that I want, Mr. O'Herrin."

He stroked his long, silken mustache again in ruminant thought. "I don't handle donkeys, you see, mister. The

best you can do is to put an advertisement in the *Cork Echo* or the *Cork Examiner*. After you get some reply or other, Murphy will look at the donkey for you. Turn around, Murphy."

A small, upstanding, leather-necked man in the rear rank of the bar-squad removed a pliable upper lip from the rim of his glass and wheeled about in a military manner, with his face widening into a good-natured grin.

"Sure I'll do what I can," said he.

"He'll do you well, both you and the donkey," added Mr. O'Herrin heartily. We shook hands good-by.

3

I had already ascertained why Cork is called Cork. It is called Cork because it floats.

First, it floats on an island in the broad River Lee. Old Spenser, who lived only thirty miles away at Kilcolman wrote:

The spreading Lee, that, like an island fayre,
Encloseth Corke with his divided floode.

Secondly, it floats in an atmosphere so charged with H_2O that the mere thought of going without an umbrella will, it is affirmed, bring on a violent shower.

"It is always raining here in Cork," they say. "You can't trust it." But while I was in the vicinity, you could always trust it to rain.

There was, nevertheless, a charm about the city, a charm which became stronger on acquaintance with its people, for through the veins of the citizens of Cork flows the very essence of the hospitality of southern Ireland.

They were not difficult to meet. All one had to do was

to speak to them. And since I needed information, I inquired, when the opportunity afforded, as to the fitness of a donkey and donkey cart for traveling the roads of Ireland. I wanted, I explained, to see Ireland in the most intimate way I could. I wanted to come as close as I could to the everyday people of Ireland. . . .

But I seldom got as far as that. The answer to my questioning was always the same. Storms, gales, typhoons of laughter. I tried it discreetly while cashing a check at the Provincial Bank of Ireland, Ltd. For several minutes, banking ceased. I inquired again—now more discreetly—of a charming lady from Kerry at the Windsor Hotel.

“A—a *donkey cart*?” And the foyer sounded to a storm of contagious Kerry laughter.

“But what in the world is so funny about a donkey and donkey cart?”

She looked at me seriously for a moment, then another unquenchable torrent of laughter came bubbling up. “Oh, oh—yourself and a donkey cart . . . yourself . . . *oh!*”

4

It was Sister Benedict of the Convent of the Presentation who at last straightened the matter out with a few words.

The Convent of the Presentation lies along a hillside street not far from the church of St. Anne Shandon, so noted and so beloved for its sweet-toned bells. As I described my proposed equipage to the good sisters of the convent over an excellent cup of tea, there was enough ingenuous merriment to alter completely my lifelong belief in the unchanging solemnity of nuns. There was also a high degree of incredulity, which in its way, was more de-

pressing than laughter. When I said "donkey" the sisters did not believe me!

I looked at the lady from the hotel who was sitting at the tea table across from me. "Is it such a terrible thing then, to go around—like *that*?"

"You'll be a traveling, one-ring circus over the best of Ireland," she bubbled, and abandoned herself once more to mirth.

"But that isn't the idea," I protested. "I haven't any craving to become a playboy of the western world. It is simply a matter of finding the best and simplest way of coming as close to the land as I can." But I thought to myself, "Good Lord! Perhaps it *would* be better to . . ."

It was then that Sister Benedict, possibly reading my thoughts, came to the rescue. "Go right ahead," she said. "You won't be a one-ring circus at all, for there are thousands in Ireland who use a donkey. He is a humble creature these days it is true, but he was none too humble for their grandfathers and grandmothers. How could you meet the people from the high seat of a railway coach or a motor? Indeed, you can't do better at all than to travel with a donkey."

"But why all this laughter?" I asked.

"Ah, you mustn't mind them," she said, controlling her face. "It is only because a donkey seems so—seems so strange for an American. At the end of a week, you'll be Irish entirely."

Tea being over, we walked with the nuns into their long, sloping garden, with its conservatory, and its pear trees trained up the walls, and its view of the military barracks on a neighboring hill. In a grotto at the lower end of the garden was a statue of St. Patrick banishing a pair of snakes from Ireland—snakes endowed with two full rows of carniv-

orous teeth; a phenomenon amusingly in support of the statement that there are no snakes in the country, for the maker of the statue had obviously never seen a snake.

Now we were shown the school rooms where instruction and the noon meal are given to some two thousand needy pupils every day. Upon the walls and the movable glass screens, certain of the sisters with a talent for drawing had painted domestic animals and flowers. Here was a room full of young girls. They sang for us in Gaelic, a rich, three-part harmony. "We teach them altogether in the Irish," explained their instructor. "We are supposed to use no other language in the class rooms." And here was a room fairly seething with little Irish lads. "These are the lively ones," said the nun in charge. "One should have a switch up the sleeve." She felt up her sleeve but there was no switch. . . .

Back in the reception room, a few of the younger nuns—hardly more than girls—were engaged in the absorbing process of looking over my companion's vanity case "just to see what was happening in the outer world."

Here was a powder puff: "What's that! Something frivolous, I'm sure!" They peeped into the tiny mirror, holding it up to each other. "Look at yourself. You'll never be able to see yourself again."

"What—you don't have mirrors?"

"No," they replied.

But it was difficult for me to conceive of any woman in a situation like that. "You don't mean to say . . . Is it a rule?"

"Yes, it is a rule."

I tried to make the best of it with "Ah well, when people are good-looking, they don't really have to bother with mirrors."

"Have you been to Blarney Castle yet?" inquired one of the sisters innocently.

"No—not yet. But it is strange that you should speak of it for I am going there this afternoon!"

We talked on about Blackrock and Rostellen and Youghal (Yawl) and other beautiful spots about Cork.

Far off in the convent, a bell rang. And now a gentle gravity came over the faces of the nuns. They shook hands with us in silence—Sister Theresa, Sister Thaddeus, Sister Benedict, Sister Cecelia——

Like shadows from another world they faded quietly away.

BLARNEY

CHAPTER II

1

HANGING head downward one hundred and twenty feet above the ground, I observed the succulent Blarney green-sward below and wondered whether Patrick Kinsella had a good grip on my legs. I sincerely hoped so, for it was raining and slippery. In any event, there I was!

Four inches above my inverted face ran a long, dingy, irregular-looking slab of semi-dressed stone. Looking at it, I left off thinking what would happen if Patrick Kinsella mislaid me entirely, and began to wonder who had kissed the Blarney Stone just before me, and where, upon its furrowed gray surface, that compliment had been lavished.

True, I had not been at hand when that salute was given, but I was very sure that "lavished" was the word. For any one is likely to do things with a certain abandon when hanging head downward one hundred and twenty feet above the ground. Of course, if it had been one of those charming young ladies from Cork— On the other hand, if it had been that blue-chinned gorilla of a politician from Worcester, Mass.—

Ah well—mine not to reason who! I applied my face to the stone.

But at that moment, Patrick Kinsella called out, "Are you through, sorr?" and at the same time, not understanding my deliberation, he gave a strong heave at my legs, so that my salute, instead of being a chaste cousinly peck, was

of the passionate, sliding variety, ending very appropriately with a bump on the nose.

I took no notice of that until Patrick, with a broad, semi-punctuated grin, pocketed what I had to offer him, and went heavily down the circular stair. Then, finding that the damage was only skin-deep, I gave my attention to the stone itself.

The Blarney Stone is set into the outer side of the castle's parapet about eight feet from the topmost line of battlements. A few years ago, intrepid souls reached the stone by being let down by their feet over the outside of the castle. That practice continued until one pilgrim slipped out of the grip of his friends and hurtled downward to the branches of a great tree some seventy-five feet below where he escaped with the incredibly slight toll of a damaged ankle.

Now stout iron spikes guard the battlement, making the old method impossible. To kiss the stone at present, you must first lie on your back on the pavement of the roof, grasping a pair of vertical bars which run down through a hole in the pavement beside the parapet. Then you lower yourself through the hole and, by hanging head downward and twisting your neck as I have explained, you immediately become a candidate for assorted attentions, including a bump on the nose.

In any event it will be worth your while for:

“There is a stone there
That whoever kisses
Oh he never misses
To grow eloquent.

'Tis he may clam-ber
To a lady's cham-ber

Or become a mem-ber
Of Parliament."

Whence the potency of this ancient gray stone? This much, at least, is certain—that the verb "to blarney" stands firmly in the dictionary and it means "to flatter or cajole with complimentary talk; to coax or wheedle with praise or compliments."

This is also certain—that in the 16th Century, one Aengus O'Daly, a poet, said of the castle, "I got only flattery for food."

A little later, at the time of Queen Elizabeth, MacCarthy, head of the clan of that name which resided at Blarney, was asked repeatedly to give up the right to elect his chiefs, and instead to take his tenure of lands directly from the crown. He replied with no end of pleasant verbal messages, but failed so long to take pen in hand that at last the royal lady is reported to have got quite out of patience and said, "Hell's bells! This is all Blarney!" or words to that effect.

2

Now, as I stood up after examining the stone, the rain stopped. So I picked up my sketching materials, and hurried down the rough circular staircase and the steep path below to sketch the castle, which stands waist-deep among the crests of ancient trees. Quite suddenly, as I was setting up the canvas, the sun came out, and with it twelve little girls who had taken the small steam tram from Cork for the afternoon's outing.

I knew there were twelve because one a little older than the rest, with brown hair over her shoulders, counted them

as they came through the small gate which you may see in the sketch and said with a sigh, "There! That's my dozen!"

Then, just as I began to paint, four men sauntered up and two young boys accompanied by five small dogs of twice as many breeds. And shortly, a herd of nineteen inquisitive young heifers (attracted no doubt by the crowd) advanced with much pawing of the ground and slathering and staring, and would certainly have given me an art criticism except that the five little dogs, working with cries and signals like a hockey team, chased them ruthlessly to the other end of the meadow.

Then the little girls ran away to see the castle, the boys picked up some brushwood they had been carrying, the men made off for the village, and I was left to myself to scrape off what I had painted while the dogs had been chasing the young cows.

"Would you object if I watched you a bit?"

It was the gatekeeper of the Blarney demesne—cap, tweeds, sandy mustache, unswerving, honest blue eyes—a tall, broad-shouldered man, but a man so gaunt and thin that I thought, "He has been badly sick." After a second look at his eyes, I said to myself with some conviction, "It was the war."

He sat down on a stump and watched me silently for half an hour.

"Could you make an outline of a little girl's head?" he asked at last. He had a little girl, it seemed, who liked to draw. "If you made the outline, I think she could fill it in." He went on talking pleasantly enough, while I answered as well as my work would allow.

"Do I disturb you?"

"Not at all. You won't mind though, if I answer a little vaguely. This old castle of yours, you know——"

He got up presently and said, "I'll go along now." I looked at him again. An interesting face.

"Will you be here this evening?" I inquired. "Perhaps we can have a talk. I shall have tea at the inn about seven."

"Couldn't you have tea with my missus and me, now?" he inquired eagerly.

"Thank you, not very well. But I'll drop in afterward if it is convenient."

He told me where he lived—smiled, and went away, his clothes swaying and blowing loosely on his gaunt frame.

3

The daughter of the gatekeeper looked on shyly as I opened the paint box and took out the palette, rimmed with color.

"But I couldn't do much with it—not anything, in fact."

"Never mind. We'll try it, at least. Do you know of a scene, anything in particular you would like to paint?"

She decided on her own house, so we set up a small piece of Academy board on the parapet of a nearby bridge which the Republicans had broken two years earlier when they tried to break the Free State. I showed her how to block-in the house with charcoal, then—after finding the proportions—how to lay in the details.

At first she worked very timidly and tremulously, needing much help. Not until she began to paint did she forget herself enough to carry on alone. Now she was trying the color, adding a bit of ocher here, a touch of white there; her graceful little body was bent forward to the painting, her cheeks were flushed, her lips eager and half parted.

I left her quietly and went with her father through a

great iron gate and along an avenue of vast trees into the Blarney demesne.

As we walked, it came to me to ask the gaunt man beside me a question which had been in my mind before.

"Yes, I was in it," he said. "Signal master of a division of flying artillery. We went all over the front. When an army went into action, we were brought up and supported them. . . . It did queer things to men—the war. You might not think it to look at me now, but before the war I weighed nearly two hundred pounds. I offered to box any man of my own age or five years younger in the division."

He looked down at his emaciated frame. "How many years ago was it? Eight, nine, ten . . . It's only within the last year that I've begun to be better . . . But here is the castle. Would you care to look around a bit?"

He pointed out the matters of interest—the somber guard room which had lost its ceiling and was therefore one with the banquet hall above; the fourteen-foot walls; the gutters, down which lead and boiling oil as well as rain might pour; the various slits and apertures through which the 15th Century defenders hurled bolts, javelins, epithets, curses and other unsavory trifles upon the heads of the enemy.

Here, on the upper floor, was my lord's and lady's chamber. How astonished and outraged they would have been to wake up one morning and find the castle as it is at present and themselves lying there in their silks and satins staring up through the broken ceiling at the sky! Some one would have paid dearly for that!

The ruined residence beside the keep dates only from the early 18th Century, yet it has crumbled to a decrepitude

in comparison with which the older building takes on an appearance of youth and vigor. The castle, in its day, was the strongest fortress in south Munster. Before the advent of gunpowder it was as nearly impregnable as the human equation—particularly the Irish equation—would allow any fortress to be.

There are caves under the castle with sides of tortured limestone, all the seams of which “point toward the ten o’clock sun,” thereby showing which way the stress came in those primeval days when rock was being poured molten into the foundations of the world.

The gaunt, grave man beside me, who was something of a geologist, assured me that had this limestone behaved decently and decorously as limestone should, it would be several hundred feet below the silt and gravel and loam of the surrounding country. He even blamed it for exposing to the light of day certain shells and petrifications of a vastly older age than ours, even as far inland as Inniscarra.

We wondered, as we walked back to the inn, what was the cause in which the south of Ireland, even in that distant day, had raised its rocky Hibernian knuckles out of the steaming waters of the Atlantic.

The little girl had finished her painting and was sitting apart, silently, like Joan of Arc, looking beyond her work and seeing her visions. She did not hear us until we were very near; then she jumped up quickly and said that what she had done was not very good, she knew. Not very good . . .

“But you have been thinking what you would *like* to do! About the paintings you would like to make.”

For answer, she blushed and smiled and lowered her head.

And as I climbed by candle light to my room in the inn I thought, "Keep on with your dreams, little maid. It is fine high dreams that Ireland is needing now. The danger is past and most of the fighting. It's visions you need, little maid. It's visions you need . . ."

“INTRODUCING — ”

CHAPTER III

1

THE first answer to the advertisement arrived half an hour after the publication of the *Cork Echo*:

361 Gullion's Cross

Donkey and cart for sale cheap. Can be seen at the above address from 3 to 6 any day.

P. MAHONY.

I did not call at once on Murphy, the donkey expert. First I wanted to see what P. Mahony had to offer, so I started up the hillside back of Cork, inquiring the way as I went. Gullion's Cross, however, was illusive. Every time I inquired, it was only “five minutes away.”

One has to be a little careful of those five minute walks in Ireland. The idea back of it is kindly, for it aims to encourage the walker. But after half an hour's grind in which your objective began at five minutes away and has remained there with astonishing consistency, you get the strange impression that you are walking up a flowing river of land, and that if you were only to pick out a nice comfortable stone to sit on, you could have quite a pleasant ride in the opposite direction.

But at last here was Gullion's Cross, and here, in the center of a sunken row of little houses with one long roof

for the lot, was Number 361—a tiny shop for the sale of slightly worn cakes and ginger pop and other gustatory impedimenta.

“The donkey,” said Mrs. Mahony, “is eating us out of hearth and home. I used to take him to market, but now that the b’y is in school and I have to be in the shop . . . Come wid me, if you please.”

“Is it a good donkey?” I asked, bending my neck to follow her into the minute back yard.

“He’s quiet as a lamb and goes like fire,” said Mrs. Mahony.

In the yard was a two-wheeled cart, a large padlocked crate such as are used to ship pianos, and four rows of cabbages. The cart was solidly built and by no means old. It had massive wheels, and a green frame with removable back, front, and sides about eighteen inches high. There was a pair of springs between the body and the single axle. These were more decorative than useful, however, for the cart’s body was supported upon wooden blocks fastened in the middle of each spring. Heavy shafts, from which formidable chains were dangling, ran the full length of the cart and extended out two feet or more beyond the back board, so that when the cart stood alone, it rested on these extensions, raising its powerful manacled shafts to the sky.

But now Mrs. Mahony had unlocked the piano box. As she opened the door, a small, strange apparition, apparently composed of old broomsticks, scrubbing brushes, and a gigantic pair of ears, flitted swiftly under her elbow and made for the cabbage patch. I looked at the formidable cart, then back at the wisp-like creature which was now being pursued by Mrs. Mahony among the cabbages. Though I knew little more about donkeys than that the end with the ears went first, my heart sank. Between this beast

and its burden, there was no possible relation. Every adjudicating fiber in my body assured me that this mosquito-of-the-cabbages would not stand up before that cart for ten miles.

“Could you sell the cart and harness without the donkey?”

“Faith, I could not,” puffed Mrs. Mahony, who by this time had her arms, but not in affection, about the scrubbing brush’s neck. “The cart and harness cost nothing to feed, but this thief of the world only eats and eats and never a word of work does he do for his keep.”

“How much do you ask for the whole outfit—donkey, cart and harness?”

“Five pounds, ten shillings.”

Um . . . This was a matter for a specialist like Murphy.

I told Mrs. Mahony that before I decided, I must see a friend.

2

“Port Said? I know it well,” announced Murphy from his seat in the jaunting-car, as we drove up the hill called the Dublin Road. “In the old days, I was a soldier all my life. Crete, Bombay, Calcutta . . . India right up to the west border . . . Africa too, fightin’ the black men and the Boers . . .”

“How did you like the Fuzzy-Wuzzies?” I inquired, thinking of Kipling’s poem. But Murphy, who had never heard of the poem, thought I meant the ladies and began to talk of Piccadilly Circus. When we got straightened out, however, it appeared that his information and Kipling’s did not run along entirely parallel lines. “The *Zulus* is the best men of the lot,” he said. “Chists on ’em like gorillas.

Muscles like a piece of rope. Why—the wimmin among them is a better class of men than most of the men you see here!”

But now we had arrived in the shadow of a railroad bridge where Murphy's young son, consisting mostly of freckles and a grin, was waiting for us with Mrs. Mahony's donkey, or, more correctly, Mrs. Mahony's former donkey, for I had bought the entire outfit, even to the string which held the harness together.

“It is better to walk from here,” said Murphy, “otherwise, the man we are after seeing might take some wrong notion about the price if he saw you driving up so fine. His name is O'Leary, and he is what you call a tinker. He buys donkeys along the road for next to nothing, and sells them for ten times the price.” We walked toward a straggling row of thatched houses which trailed up the Dublin Road. “You make your dicker with him, then walk away and I'll talk to him. What you want to do is to make him give us a good donkey and take this one. He ought to allow you a pound.”

At the second cottage, O'Leary appeared on demand—a ragged, wild-looking youth with red hair, bloodshot eyes, and so gentle a voice and manner that he appeared to be constantly on the verge of tears.

“I've got just the identical donkey for your purpose, sir. He's a lovely little donkey, as good a little donkey as any you can find on hoofs. Would I be forward in asking why you want a donkey?”

I told him.

“This one will make Belfast sitting down, sir, to say little of Dublin! The roads do be good traveling too, this year. But you couldn't have done it a year ago. You might have

got a bullet through you.” He ran off to fetch the donkey.

“Last year on the roads *was* bad,” agreed Murphy. “It was a frightful time altogether, for the last two or three years. Not a man of us knew each night if he would be shot before morning. One day they had me out with the rest and lined me up against a wall, all ready to shoot. Then I got mad and said to them, ‘Go ahead and shoot! But when you shoot me, you shoot a soldier, and there ain’t one of yez who is that!’ (Let ’em go ahead and shoot! They’d get a good drilling for it the next day, I’ll tell yer!) Then the sergeant says, ‘Let that man go!’ And they brought me right to my own door and put me inside.

“And another time, I remember——”

But he got no further, for around the corner of the cottage swung the very synthesis of magnificent donkeyhood—gray, upstanding, well-proportioned, and clad in a new set of iron shoes which rang with the sound of mailed feet upon the road. A narrow black band extended from the mane down the center of the back. Another narrow black band, running from shoulder to shoulder, formed a well-defined cross just below the mane. As I took in these pleasing details, their bearer stopped, turned, and looked me full in the face with dark, cognizant eyes. . . . From my point of view, the matter was completely settled. We would be companions of the road, this lad and I. Don Quixote and Rosinante . . . Bellerophon and Pegasus . . . Tom Mix and Tony . . . Already I felt a rising sentiment at the thought of the hardships we would share together. . . .

“How old is he?” I asked.

“Just three years,” said O’Leary.

“How much do you want for him?” I inquired.

“Two pounds, sir.”

"Done!" I said, and handed over the notes, while Murphy, aghast at such a deal, threw up his hands.

O'Leary pocketed the money.

"*She's* a lovely little donkey, she is," he said. "*She's* a lovely little donkey."

WE HIT THE ROAD

CHAPTER IV

1

THE sudden transposition of the donkey to the feminine gender was somewhat disconcerting. It was as though the nurse had come to you saying, "It's a boy," and then, half an hour later had announced, "No, it's a girl." Another confusing factor lay in the name, which, O'Leary said, was Jack. That wouldn't do at all. There was, of course, the possibility of Jacqueline; but she didn't *look* like Jacqueline. So she started out on the journey carrying the simple appellation, "Herself."

Young Freckles-and-grin Murphy accompanied us out through the genial but perilous convolutions and left-side-of-the-road traffic of Cork. We did not go forth unobserved, for on the bridges and the quays along the River Lee were numbers of the unemployed, slumping over the balustrades and supporting with workless backs the sides of buildings as far as the eye could reach—all tired out, poor lads, with having nothing to do, and having all day to do it in.

Nevertheless, there was a feeling of activity about the quays. A dozen coastwise steamers were in port, and the waterside streets were filled with stevedores busily at work shifting stacks of hides, great barrels of porter, firkins of world-famous butter,¹ and massive crates of eggs, while the

¹ David Livingstone, the explorer, found a butter barrel from Cork in the heart of darkest Africa.

air resounded to the hysterical shrieks of pigs and pigeons who were about to be parted, it might be for years and it might be forever.

We continued on through the muddy streets, diverting certain of the wayfarers on the Grand Parade and the Mar-dyke, and being in turn diverted by the weather, which blessed our departure by five complete baptisms before we had so much as reached the edge of the city. But at last, having arrived at the place where town and country meet, here was young Freckles-and-grin holding out his hand and saying, "God give you luck, sir. God give you luck!"

Now, adrift on the bosom of a strange land, we followed along a broad if sodden road with the clear, beautiful, swiftly flowing Lee at our right, until, coming to a bridge and an inn which had previously been noted on the map, we turned—donkey and man and river—resolutely toward the West.

2

In general, it was our intention—and when I say "our intention," I am taking for granted a certain acquiescence on the part of my companion—it was our intention to circle the whole of Ireland, traveling up the west coast to the Giant's Causeway, and down the east coast to Cork. How far we should actually go was perhaps another matter.

I had made everything as snug as my limited knowledge of donkey travel allowed. The cart was greased, the decrepit harness was assembled to the best advantage, and an impermeable oiled canvas with ropes at its four ends covered the body of the cart, in which, lying very neatly together, were two fiber cases for clothes and paint, a tin trunk for provisions, and a wooden box for oats.

(But another bit of luggage not so easily carried was the assurance of several competent people that the journey could never in the world be made with one donkey.)

The first general objective was a spot called Glengarriff which lay beyond a range of mountains at the head of Bantry Bay, as shown on the end-papers of this book. Beyond Glengarriff, our trail led over another mountainous divide to the Lakes of Killarney. Beyond Killarney, we intended continuing northward up the western coast, but always with such a flexible itinerary that suggestions for vagrancies and rambling would be gratefully received and promptly acted upon.

Now, as I have said, we turned westward. For the moment, the rain had stopped. Above us a flying Irish sky bannered out in guidons of fleece-white and thunder-gray and Irish-blue. Beside us, parallel to our course and below it, lay a valley so rich, so luxuriant in trees and in undergrowth that it appeared to have been carried intact from a sunnier country far to the south. Nor had the hillside along which we traveled been neglected. For spring, passing lightly up the road not far ahead of us, had left a fragrant drift of white hawthorne along the hedges and powdered the road itself with petals of white. Green hills billowed away up the valley. Beyond like a far, clear echo, rose the crests of other distant blue hills.

But now the donkey stopped. What was wrong? She looked exactly as she had when we started, at which time I had been assured that everything was all right! The harness seemed a little tight, but no doubt that was the way to wear it. The collar, however, was wonderfully loose. It hung down around her shoulders like a necklace, not actually bumping her knees, but loose enough so that she would never, never have any trouble with her breathing. When

she walked, it moved from side to side with a pleasant rhythmic motion like the clapper of a bell.

Having made these observations, I urged her to proceed. She went on a few paces, then stopped again. Something *was* wrong. I unfastened one of the chains and lifted up the collar. On the shoulder was a small red stain. While I examined it, she stood perfectly still. The fault was mine and she knew it. She also knew that I knew it.

I regarded the damaged shoulder, crestfallen and considerably ashamed. Pshaw! I had gone along mooning at the landscape, while my small, patient friend— Pshaw!

An old man came along driving a gigantic tan horse. I asked his help.

"Tighten up your hames. They are too far apart at the bottom. I can see that from here," he said, pointing to a pair of curved metal horns around the collar which were joined together below it by a piece of string.

"What about putting a piece of cloth over the red place?"

"No. You'll make it worse, just."

So I tightened the string and pulled up the hames—which seemed to relieve the pressure considerably—and we went on into a scud of rain. But when I looked at the collar a few minutes later, it had worked back to the place where it had been before.

Again we stopped, and I took Herself out of the harness and let her graze on the lush grass of the roadside while I ate a disconsolate egg under a dripping tree. Then, when I tried to insert her into the bridle again, she stepped on the rope which served as reins and broke one of her blinkers, through which she peered out coyly at me like an ancient dowager flirting through a dilapidated fan.

By the time I had repaired this lesser damage, another old man came along and again I asked help about the collar.

"Tighten the trace on the other side," he said, "and loosen this one so as to take the strain off this side of the collar."

There came a sudden awakening light. Harness, then, was not only for pulling! It could be adjusted! So I tightened the off chain and loosened the near one, and again suggested that we go on. But now in a solid, impenetrable cloud, rain surged across the valley. Herself looked around, chose a large protective tree on the other side of the road, went over to it—and stood! She stood until the cloudburst was entirely over. Then she turned and looked at me with gently imperious eye.

"Get up," I said obediently.

So—through an endless series of starts, stops, breaking harness, and episodes with little pieces of string—the afternoon wore on, until at last, here was the village of Coachford with a pleasant inn and a dry warm stable for the night. Because of a great weariness that was on me (although we had traveled only sixteen miles), I remember only two things about Coachford; first, that it was there I became acquainted with the famous Irish oaten bread, and second, that in the village church, I saw three sweet-faced little girls—all with goitres—praying to Our Lady.

3

Macroon, a few miles beyond Coachford, is a typical Irish country town, with a main street, low-roofed shops, and a vast amount of horse and donkey traffic. It is built at the base of a hill. It claims to be the birthplace of William Penn's father, and it was captured for Queen Elizabeth in 1602 by Sir Charles Wilmot. It also has a ruined castle which is said to have been built in the time of King John.

These things were easy enough to understand. But,

why, oh why—as I passed quietly along the main street—should the good people of Macroom come out and stand in their doorways and stare and laugh and stare-and-laugh again? Ah well—Macroom is only twenty miles from Cork. The *Cork Examiner* of the morning before, had, I had been told, made some pleasant mention of my journey.

Perhaps—who could tell?—perhaps this was Fame!

But as I came out of a shop where I had stopped to buy some eggs, I happened to glance at the profile of the donkey's head. Good *Lord!* I went around to the front. She raised her long face and looked me full in the eye. *Her features were locked in a set and ghastly grin.* Imagine, if you can, coming out of an egg shop in a far country and having a donkey grin at you when you are perfectly sure in your mind that a donkey *can't* grin. Was this the first dread sign of approaching dissolution, and if so, whose dissolution was it—hers or mine?

Ah no! When I had repaired the bridle a few yards up the road, I had not returned the bit to its proper place but had slipped it by accident into the hollow between the poor animal's lower lip and teeth.

4

We left Macroom by the higher road which runs up into the hills back of the town. To the right the direct route to Killarney coiled away over the lowlands. Beyond it swelled the rounded breasts of the foot hills. Green fields, irregularly rectangular, lay below us, marked with the darker green of hedgerows like the meshes of a gigantic green net which celestial fishermen had spread over the landscape to dry. In the valley's midst, the river, now ap-

proaching its source, no longer retained the strength of its maturity nor the crisp gayness of its adolescence, but crept away into tangled watercourses, now hidden and silent beneath covered ways of sedge and reed.

Chug! Again rose the dull snap which I had come to recognize as the sound of breaking harness. This time, the strap at the top of the hames had given away, letting the collar slip down to the shafts. Herself immediately stood still, for she too had come to recognize this sound as a signal to halt. *And now I saw that the hair on the other shoulder was beginning to wear off too!* O miserable collar!

I mended the strap and stuffed a small potato bag between the collar's top and Herself's neck. This took the curse off the hairless shoulders but did not leave her much space in which to breathe. However, as she was not wheezing or sneezing or giving any other demonstration of shortage of breath, I gave the signal and we started off.

Chug! This time it was the bridle; and there was the bit dangling down below her chin, and the blinkers halfway down her cheeks like a pair of grandmother's spectacles.

Ah well! Should the spirit of man be dominated by mere *things*? Not at all! Besides, it was time for lunch. I took Herself out of the harness and sent her into the bushes to graze, clad only in her slightly damaged skin.

From the crest where we had stopped, the meandering streams of the River Lee could be seen performing ever wider and more tortuous circuits through the valley bottoms. Furze bushes were beginning to appear along the hedges, furze like miniature trees of Japan, covered with sudden yellow blossoms—as though they had popped violently into bloom.

A motor came panting up the Macroom road, with a pair

of baker boys from Coachford in it. They stopped to pass the time of day with me.

"I see you've got the donkey stripped on the shoulder," said one. "It's a bad collar, it is. The Civic Guards might stop you and give you a docket."

"They might?"

"They might indeed. It's just likely."

"They might say nothing at all," said the other.

"Ah na! They might or they might not. There'll always be a black sheep among them, acting the goat. They fined a man with a donkey five pounds in Cork yesterday."

"But these spots are very small," I said. "They would hardly hurt a man, if he had them."

"Oh yes . . . still . . . Anyway, you can get donkeys all along the road," he added hopefully. "Swap them for ten bob. Good-by now!" And they were off.

They must have spread the news of my coming, for at the next public house, a bleary little man came out and said, "Do you want to buy a moke?"

"A what?"

"A moke, a joker."

"I don't know whether I do or not. What is it?"

"One of *thim*! An ass," he said, pointing to Himself.

"No thanks. One is plenty. Almost too much, in fact."

"And how much did you give, may I ask, if it ain't offending you?"

"Two pounds."

"Two pounds? I'll get you *thirty* of *thim* for that price!"

But I shook my head and went on.

Thirty donkeys, good Heavens! Thirty donkeys . . .

"Chug!" went the harness.

5

The uplands now. Gorse and numberless daisies. Buttercups and fern. Purple crags jutting out of the green-carpeted hillsides. Now rudimentary stone fences began to replace the frowzy hedges of the lowlands; and here were small, brown mountain cattle with udders exactly the same shade of brown as themselves.

After journeying upward for several hundred feet, one was surprised to see that the river, instead of having lost itself entirely in the marshes below, was rushing along full-lipped beside the road, singing a song of youthful escapade and abandon.

To the right loomed the skeleton of a mansion with mansard roof—a perfect example of that declining epoch in the lives of many buildings which might be known as the Haunted House Period. Its chimneys rose starkly above the broken walls, its corridors were bare and bleak, its windows long since shattered. An empty lodge stood beside the massive iron gate. A well-established brook ran down the driveway, unconcernedly crossed the road, and tinkled off to meet the river.

Now ahead of me on the highway appeared the neat blue uniform and the military cap of a member of the Civic Guard—and now I was probably about to receive my docket. But it turned out otherwise for he only said, "Good evening to you." Somewhat relieved, I continued on between rising hills to the village of Inchigeela—only to find that the hotel on which I had been depending was nearly as broken and shattered as the house up the road had been, with rough planks nailed over its windows and doors.

But just across a tiny bridge at the pebbled edge of the shallow, rushing river, a small white house, with black letters on a white sign, beckoned invitingly.

6

"I was a long time in America," said the gray-haired woman of the house as she set down the tea and jam and oaten cake with currants in it. I brought that phonograph with me fifteen years ago, and it has been going ever since."

"Without being repaired at all?"

"Yes, without that—although a good lot of the records were smashed when the military came. There was a great crowd of them at the hotel just a few months ago—Free State troops, I mean, that had the Republicans on the run—but long before that, at the house here, we had the Black and Tans—the English, you know. They had a Lewis gun up there in that window for two weeks blazing away at snipers in the hills."

"And do you mind," said her husband, "how you were after going out one day in a brown dress, and almost got sniped yourself? The bullet hit the wall not an inch from your head, and one of the Black and Tans got mad an' said, 'Wot kind of fightin' manners 'ave they got anyway! Tryin' to strike a lydy!' We called them Black and Tans on account of their uniforms—English soldiers, mostly, sent over here after the Armistice to fight the Sinn Feiners. A hard lot, I'll tell you."

"Ah, they weren't altogether bad, now," said his wife.

"That's right," he admitted. "It wasn't so fine to be shot and ambushed and dynamited among a lot of black strangers. The Tan time was nothing to the last trouble

between the Free State and the Republicans, though, with the bridges and police barracks blowing up all around you, and the Irish murdering each other like a lot of savages."

"The Free Staters and Republicans were all *originally* Sinn Feiners, weren't they?" I asked.

"They were. But in 1921 when Griffith signed the Treaty with England to make the south of Ireland a Free State, and the English troops moved out, there were some of the Sinn Feiners that sided with Griffith for a Free State, and some that sided against him in favor of a Republic. In February of 1922, an act was passed in Parliament to give the Free State Government the power to go ahead and govern. But de Valera and Rory O'Connor and the rest of the Republicans were holding the police barracks all over the country and the Four Courts in Dublin; and when the Free State tried to get them out, then the fight began.

"Where Griffith and Mick Collins made their mistake was in not occupying the barracks and the Four Courts with Free State troops just after the British left Ireland. But they didn't, and so the Republicans got in. Then, when Mick came along with the Free State army, the Republicans before getting out, burned the bridges and blew up the police barracks all over the south, and turned every one against them for doing it, too."

"But look here," I said, "they thought they were doing what was right for Ireland, those Republican lads. You'll have to grant them that."

He rubbed his chin sagely. "That doesn't pay for the burned barracks and the broken bridges, does it now?"

"But if they had won . . . !"

"Ah," he exclaimed, the fire of imagination lighting his eye, "of course *if they had won . . .*"

"Would you like to hear a few records, now?" the woman inquired.

"Don't be bothering him with a phonograph, Moira. They must be like a pest of flies over the whole of America."

But I protested my pleasure, and she played a Hawaiian record, replacing it—a little shyly—by "Silver Threads among the Gold."

"Did you live near by as a girl?" I asked.

"Yes, before I went to the States, I lived just a mile away. Then I came back here for a visit—and stayed." She looked shyly over at her husband, and smiled.

Now the phonograph was playing "My Dark Roseleen,"—*My Dark Roseleen*—which meant Ireland in the old days when it would have brought banishment or perhaps death to have written out the name itself. . . .

So the evening wore on; and at last, remembering the donkey's collar, I got it out and took it to a harness-maker across the bridge, who said that he would be after putting some pads on it where they would do the most good, and have it ready first thing in the morning.

7

But in the morning, a mile or two up the road, I found that the pads—as is sometimes the way with roadside remedies—were pressing directly on the places where above all others, no pads should be. So, sitting down at the roadside with my legs crossed like a tailor, a razor blade in one hand and the collar in the other, I began to rip off the little pads, while Herself looked on.

Now up to that time, I had been able to consider the matter of the collar quite philosophically. But there was something about this ripping-off of little pads which filled

me with concentrated rage. What had I developed into, good Lord, a ladies' tailor to a donkey? It seemed to me that as far back as I could remember, I had been either fussing with that impossible collar or fastening bits of defunct harness together only to hear them go "chug" again. Was I *married* to this donkey, for Heaven's sake, and must I spend the rest of my days mending little straps with pieces of wire and string? That man who invented the term "monkey business" . . . What he really meant was "donkey business." . . .

Impelled by this flow of emotion, the razor blade, in snipping off the last pad, slashed a hole in the corroded leather of the collar as well. This led to an idea. If a convexity was no good, how about a concavity? And now, describing a large circle with the steel blade, I cut ruthlessly in through the leather, in through a layer of brown felt, and into a central core of straw, making a large, cuplike depression at the point of contact.

I placed the collar on the patient, passive neck. Oh pleasant and enheartening spectacle! The points of the shoulders were free, their only contact being that with the mountain air of the fine June morning.

Our momentary troubles over, we tramped along light-heartedly past five miles of little lakes and rough pastures, the latter star-sprinkled with daisies and mountain violets. A blue haze spread over the approaching hills, and the ever-returning scent of hawthorne from the valleys was like the coming of good news.

Now we were in the hills themselves, and the donkey, with surprising sagacity for her three years, tacked back and forth across the road as she went up and up, like a small boat against the wind. Soon the delightful village of Bealan-geary crept by, with ten latent masterpieces for a land-

scape painter along its hedges; and not long after came a small road off the highway marked Gaugane Barra.

It was a very steep road, the road to Gaugane Barra, and Herself took considerable persuading and encouraging. But after a short mile of it into the ruggedest of hills, we came upon that which we had hardly suspected—a small, jewel-like lake set amongst high mountains, with white swans on its breast, and a little island with a chapel; and besides the chapel, a magnificent cluster of purple-blossomed rhododendrons, glowing against the grayer purple of the mountains.

In the breathless mirror of the lake hung the rich, living image of the rhododendrons, the vast, gray-purple mass of the mountains, the Italian blue of the afternoon sky—glories which curved and broadened and blended into a greater glory as the white swans, passing slowly down the lake, fashioned for themselves a pathway of rare and indescribable beauty.

GLENGARRIFF

CHAPTER V

1

THERE was a strange collection of objects at the grave of Father Dyonisius O'Mahoney—all placed there, I imagine, with a prayer; for the shores of Gaugane Barra are hallowed ground. A ring, a sidecomb, some religious medals, an American silver quarter, the stopper of a perfume bottle, some pennies and half pence, some hairpins and a soldier's button bearing the harp of Ireland. As I looked at these tokens which had been placed in the small cave beside the lake, my pulse quickened. What a mine of literary material, if one only knew those prayers! And what prayer had accompanied those long, grim, cupro-nickel bullets—the kind of bullets made by men to kill other men? One might half guess. But think well, Father Dyonisius O'Mahoney, before you carry that petition any higher. Put into it all the thought and wisdom of your hermitting of twenty-eight years.

From the grave of the old hermit, an artificial causeway extends out to the small island, on which is a rough-walled inclosure some thirty feet each way with eight round-arched cells fashioned in the wall. Above these cells are the Stations of the Cross cut in low relief into the stone, while in the center of the square, on a pedestal of rough blocks rises a full-sized cross of oak bearing the legend, "Here stood, in the VIth Century, the cell of St. Finnbar, first bishop of Cork."

St. Finnbar is much venerated in the south of Ireland. To this spot throughout the year, particularly during the latter part of September, numbers of devout people come to pray.

The small stone chapel of the rhododendrons near the inclosure, holds, I think, some of the finest stained glass windows in Ireland, the subjects being the Madonna and certain of the Irish saints, each of whom occupies the full panel of a window.

As I was about to leave the island by the iron gate which shuts the causeway from the land, a boy from the small hotel on the shore of the lake came along with the donkey in tow. It would be better, we had decided, not to put Herself into a stall for the night where she might cut her abraded shoulders on the halter but to leave her on the island where she could run free. So we "tied her loose," whereupon she raised her heels in a frivolous farewell and trotted out of sight among the shrubbery.

As for myself, I began a sketch of the cliffs and the chapel and the limpid reflections in the still water of the lake; but no sooner had I set up my canvas than a small breeze came along—just the wisp of a breeze—yet enough to destroy the better half of the subject. So I put away the canvas again, and walked along the shore to that point where the infantile River Lee, passing with a faint cry under the bridge which marks its nativity, starts away, still nourished by the lake's quiet strength, on its far journey toward the sea.

The mountains beyond—now lavender and cobalt and red-gold in the waning afternoon light—were too far and too high to climb before the night came on; so I returned to the island and Herself. But where was she? A strange quiet prevailed. No sight of her pleasant gray coat, no friendly sound of cropping grass . . .

I wandered down the green causeway and peered into St. Finnbarr's former residence with its empty cells looking rather ghastly in the dusk. No, not there! I searched in the heavy underbrush, among the trees beyond the inclosure, among the rhododendrons rising in fragrant masses along the water. Not there! Was there anywhere else to look? *Yes, great Heaven!* With rising consternation I made for the chapel, stopped, and looked down the vista of well-designed benches.

There, before the holy shrine, nibbling a little timidly at the altar cloth, and looking slighter and more insignificant than usual under the streaming light of the stained glass, stood the little donkey! She saw me and came clattering back with hoofs which resounded like machine-guns, to get a piece of apple or whatever else my pockets might hold!

But I do not think that the good St. Finnbarr and Our Lady, looking down from their stained glass, took the matter too seriously. St. Finnbar, being Irish, must have the best of a sense of humor, and as for Our Lady (when I looked back after skittering the little donkey out as quietly as possible), she was smiling just as gently as she had smiled before.

(But those two small cherubs above her shoulder . . . Was it possible that their expressions had changed just a little?)

2

That night in the pleasant hospice at the edge of the lake, I heard for the first time in a number of years of wandering, the half-lovely, half-humorous two-toned song of the cuckoo. Often as I hear it, I shall remember that song as I listened to it for the first time in Humperdinck's

Hänsel and Gretel. For when the artist's transcription from nature rises immutably enough into the realm of pure beauty, we remember not nature, but the work of the artist himself, and this is his highest benison.

That night, beside the voice of the cuckoo, there was other beauty. Swans, gliding slowly into the moonlight before the small, still island. The fragrance of oleanders drifting in through the window. Stars innumerable, spreading like a golden powder above the sharp, black barrier of the hills.

3

But Herself did not do very well on the island over night. Perhaps the atmosphere was too ascetic. Perhaps there were too many gnats. In any event, there were several bits of evidence to show that she had not been entirely happy. Item one: she had pawed a deep hole in the causeway beside the gate. Item two: she had loosened both front shoes in the process. Item three: when I tried to persuade her in the direction of the cart, she launched a kick at me, which, if it had struck where she intended, would certainly have shivered my most trustworthy timbers. Fortunately I was carrying a folded wooden camp chair on my arm at the time; and Herself's hoofs, landing on the slats of the chair instead of on my own, only bounced me a yard or two away.

It was during the moment of that precise, well-directed kick that a suspicion arose in my mind. "If you are only three, as O'Leary the tinker said, you are certainly the most precocious child for your years that I ever saw!" But when I brought the morning oats, the vehemence had passed, and shortly after, we started off through the rain

for a canyon called Keim-an-eigh which leads over the hills to Snave Bridge—which in turn leads over other hills to Glengarriff.

The Pass of Keim-an-eigh is a small, rugged, verdure-covered mountain gap of considerable charm. It has been much praised locally for its "savage grandeur," and compared to the passes of Switzerland. But a visitor, even an amiably inclined visitor like myself, should not be imposed upon in that manner. To compare Keim-an-eigh to the Simplon or St. Gothard means one of two things: either that the writer is bemusing himself and his reader or that he has never actually seen a pass of savage grandeur—although I have no doubt that in the old days when Bonnoght or Kern or Gallowglas, or the O'Learys and O'Sullivans were staging a good fight in Keim-an-eigh, it may have seemed very savage indeed.

When we emerged from between its fern-covered cliffeens, the rain had stopped for a moment. Before us spread a broad valley, both distinguished and authentic, stretching away, smoke-blue and mighty, into other distant smoke-blue valleys. And there to the left, as we trekked westward down the shining curves of good white road, lay the long finger of Bantry Bay with a streak of foam across it. As yet we could not see the far Atlantic which was to mark a change in our course to the north; but that streak of foam was as a covenant before us. It meant that this was the sea with the tide coming in. Then, down came the rain again.

4

And now, after Herself's shoes had been tightened at a wayside smithy near Snave Bridge, we went up another hill

and out onto an endless, desolate, gray moor, she dragging herself along like the tag end of a mis-spent life, and, in spite of all my importunities, going slower and slower. At the time, I feared that something was the matter, but later I found that her ailment was chronic to the species. Donkeys simply will not go fast in the rain. We stopped among the great rocks and dripping verdure of the moor, and had slices of oaten bread, service à la carte, to cheer our moistened spirits.

As we finished our repast, an old woman came out of the rain behind us and journeyed on with us across the moor, saying that it was wet weather and that she had walked that day from Bantry which was ten miles away. So, as we came to the crest of a hill with the road sloping gently away before us, and as the donkey seemed somewhat refreshed, I invited the woman to mount the cart.

"I don't mind," she said and climbed agilely to one of the fiber cases at the front. "This is better than a motor, just. You don't have to go with your hair flyin' to the wind."

But having walked the best part of twenty miles over hill and dale myself, I would have stepped with great willingness into a Mercedes or Rolls-Royce, or even into one of those considerably smaller cars from Detroit.

We reached a crest above a deep, luxuriant valley.

"Oh my, it's a beautiful place is Glengarriff—the most *beauteous* place! There's a big island with an old castle on it amongst the smaller islands of the bay, and there's a fine lady lives on it—a sister-in-law to Lord Bryce that was the ambassador to America—and the island was all rock, but she brought millions of boatloads of earth from the mainland for its beauty-fiction. You'll be able to see it in a minute from now." But a thick mist came down and

obliterated everything except the trunks of tall trees beside the road. Huge vines like those of the tropics twisted and crept about the trees, while below, the giant blossoms of an infinity of pink and purple rhododendrons shone wanly through the mist.

"Do you know the hotels in Glengarriff?" I inquired, as the old woman dismounted at her crossroad. "I thought of going to Roche's or the Eccles. Would they have stables there for the donkey?"

"Oh, they have stables all right, in plenty," she said, casting a critical, kindly glance over my shambling equipage. "But . . . *why don't you try Casey's?*"

5

Sitting alone, note-book in hand on the sea wall in Glengarriff, I attempted to put my thoughts regarding the scene into some form more permanent than a vague fluidity. In the warm, humid atmosphere of the place, however, it was much more agreeable just to sit. The bay before me—a long wedge of the sea lying between distant, green-sloped shores—was studded with islands which varied in size from several acres down to sizable boulders. The largest of these, lying across the bay beyond the others, appeared to close the harbor from the sea. The ebb tide had left the nearer islands rearing solidly out of the flat, shallow bed of the bay, which—now free from water—lay like a fantastic no-man's land, covered by a twisted mass of brilliant, rust-colored kelp. This kelp extended ten or twelve feet up the steep sides of the islands to high water mark.

The blue of the sea, the bright unusual color of the seaweed, the vivid green of the numerous islands above the line of the tide, and their brilliant ochre foundations below

made an incursion into the realm of color for which the memory found no duplicate.

To the back, up the hillside beyond the Eccles Hotel, rose a tangle of eucalyptus and holly, with a lower undergrowth of arbutus and fern and fuchsia, and dells and boreens, and long stretches of green moss sprinkled with the fallen blossoms of the ever-present rhododendron.

At last, moved by the same focusing of impulse which makes us rise from bed of a morning after we have intended it for an hour, I got out my map to make a leisurely survey of the vicinity. As I did so, a little, rural-looking old man with a spongy red nose and black puttees who had been propped motionless as a gargoyle over the sea wall, now showed certain symptoms of returning vitality.

"This is a landman's map," I said, holding it out to him, "will you have a look at it?"

"I will," he said, and taking it into hands as gnarled as a bunch of dry leaves, he examined it minutely.

"Do you know this coast?" I inquired at last.

"I do." Silence.

"I suppose you have sailed up and down it a number of times."

"I have." Silence.

"It is very rugged, isn't it?"

"It is." Silence.

"Er—have you been to Dublin?" I asked a little wildly.

"I have."

"And London?"

"I have."

"Well—*have you been to Dar-es-Salaam on the west coast of Africa?*"

"*I have,*" he said! And with that, he returned the map,

gave a sort of sideways nod, and wandered off; and I haven't seen him from that day to this. (But I have always remembered him because he was the only man I met in the south of Ireland who wasn't a good talker, but perhaps he wasn't a south of Ireland man at all.)

Then another old man who also looked as though he had never been a mile away came along, and stopped near by to light the better half of a clay pipe. And I remarked that I had never seen anything quite like the bay before. Whereupon he removed the pipe from his mouth and mildly observed that there was a bay something like this one in the Moluccas. Now the Moluccas are so far away from everywhere else that even at this moment, without looking them up on the map, I do not know where they are. Then the old man, having lighted his pipe, nodded sideways like the other and wandered on.

Thereupon I got quickly down from the wall, for the next old man who came along would probably have told me about sailing the canals of Mars or catching starfish on the Milky Way, and then I should certainly have given an insane cheer and fallen off the sea wall onto my head—which is no way to act when some one is depending on you for oats and bran and cracked corn.

But there was the Eccles Hotel across the road, and in it was a famous library. I would have lunch there, I decided, and spend the afternoon among its books.

6

Two gentlemen sitting before the library fire looked up. They were entirely dissimilar in type. The face of one was grim, sharp, heavily lined, and very white. It was

the face of a man who was deadly tired and perhaps a little ill. He wore the immaculate, conventional clothes of a London bank president.

The other was a boyish-looking man with blue eyes, red cheeks and white, excitable hair. He wore a large, loose-flowing, light-blue cravat, and tweeds.

Now the hotel manager who had entered the library with me was introducing us. "This is Dr. Hector Munro of London," he said nodding at the blue-eyed man, "and this," mentioning my name, "is the gentleman we saw passing yesterday with the donkey."

I felt an immediate keen awakening of interest on the part of the man with the blue tie. He sprang up and shook hands like a boy. The other smiled too as we shook hands, the smile of a thoroughly tired man.

"An *Ausflug*! Ah—that's the way to do it!" cried the doctor from London. "You've hit it! I used to do that too. At the beginning of the holidays—when I was studying at Aberdeen—I used to send my things packing and take a stick and start out afoot for my home in the Scottish highlands a hundred and eighty miles distant. Slept in shepherd's huts or whatever places I could find all the way."

"And it took you just about three days to get over the effects of your examinations!" said the tired man.

"Ah—less than that! I was done with them the moment I put on my kilts. And the food one got! Buttermilk, good oaten cake, butter, eggs—enough for any man. Simple food . . . fresh air . . ."

"Some men go even farther than that," I said. "There was a man once who didn't even believe very much in possessions."

The doctor's eyes flashed a quick response. "And I am convinced," he said, "that that was not merely a question of

ethics either, but a matter of actual health to the human race. This beastly rot that our civilization has set up! Men herded together like animals. Tinned food, underground railways, industrial slavery——”

“—and pills,” added the tired man, “you doctors with your pills and all! You know they’re not an earthly bit of good. You’ll get a reaction from them, yes. But what about the reaction *after* the reaction, eh?”

The blue eyes of the other twinkled. “Pshaw! You’re telling these things to your grandmother! We know all that! Let me tell you a story:

“I had a baronet, an M.P., who had a double chin and weighed two stone too much. He came to me and I simply told him what was perfectly obvious—that he needed to stop eating. He didn’t like that at all; so he went to another fellow. Well, I saw him again after a few months and he looked as fit as possible—no extra weight, good color, straight as an athlete. I was interested so I went to the other doctor myself and asked what had happened. He laughed and said, ‘Thanks for sending me such a good patient. You prepared him perfectly with your advice, so that when he came to me, all I had to do was to give him some bread pills—with careful instructions—and cut down his diet. He drops in every two weeks. Thanks a lot!’

. . . So don’t blame us,” added the man with the blue eyes, laughing, “when that is the sort of people you are!”

We talked on for half an hour, until at last the doctor said to me, “You’re going to Dublin, aren’t you?”

“Yes, I expect to.”

“Well, if you go to Dublin, you ought to meet ‘A.E.’—George Russell, you know.”¹

¹ “A. E.” (George William Russell) was born in a small village in the north of Ireland in 1867. He is a distinguished poet, painter of note,

And I thought, "‘A. E.’—yes, that would be worth coming far and long for! ‘A. E.,’ the poet, painter, statesman, the lover of all Ireland. Perhaps the greatest spirit *in* Ireland." However, to meet him was quite another question.

But now the doctor was saying: "*He's a friend of mine. If you like, I'll give you a letter . . .*"

I was only half through thanking him when a little grizzled man with whom my two acquaintances had an appointment came in. They sprang up to greet him, and left with him a moment later; but the doctor returned to say, "You must have tea with us here at four. Mrs Bryce is coming over from the island." It was only three o'clock. I turned back to the library with its row after row of silent, beckoning books.

editor of *The Irish Statesman*, sociologist, and a member of that group of brilliant Irish men and women which gave rise to the Irish Renaissance. To many he represents the rarest synthesis of heart and mind in all Ireland. The nom de plume "A. E." derives from the first two letters of the earlier nom de plume, "Aeon."

THE LADY OF THE ISLAND

CHAPTER VI

1

THE library at the Eccles Hotel is unique, for it contains the collected books of a great family. Looking down the long shelves, I wished that I were Arthur Symons, or Padraic Colum, or Christopher Morley, so that instead of wandering strangely about like Herself on the sacred island, I might immediately make my way to the richest foliage and browse greedily on the tenderest, mellowest leaves.

Well—here were Humboldt's *Cosmos*, and Disraeli's *Amenities of Literature*, and the *Memoirs of Philippe de Comines*—all in a row with *Voyages & Travels* by Captain Cook, *Pilgrimages to the Spas* by Dr. Johnson, and Gautier's *Wanderings in Spain*. And here were the *Reminiscences of an Old Bohemian*, a *Life of George Cruikshank*, and the works of Laurence Sterne, 1780 edition, besides which stood a noble edition of Don Quixote in four volumes published in 1821.

And here was an ancient tome fairly sizzling with long s's—surely the great-grandfather of all the modern “uplift books” in the world.

“A young man,” it seemed to read, “who ran through his patrimony, fpendng it in profligacy, was at length reduced to utter want and dispair. He rushed out of his house intending to put an end to his life and stopped on arriving at an eminence overlooking what was once his estate. He

fat down, ruminated for a time, and rofe with the determination that he would recover them . . .”

Another battered volume caught my eye. This was the *Letters of a Chinese Philosopher to his Friends in the East*—that is, supposedly to his friends in the East—for the book, written in 1774, was plainly a satire on Europe by a European.

“The Queen,” it said, speaking of Spain, “is more beautiful than the rising sun, and reckoned one of the first wits in Europe. She had a glorious opportunity of displaying the readiness of her invention and her skill at repartee lately at court. The Duke of Lerma coming up to her with a bow and a smile and presenting a nosegay set with diamonds, Madame, cries he, I am your most obedient servant. Oh Sir, replies the Queen without any prompter, I am very proud of the great honor you do me. Upon which she made a low courtesy, and all the courtiers fell a-laughing at the readiness and smartness of her reply . . .”

But where was the flowing blue cravat of Dr. Munro, and where was the tea he had promised? Certainly he had said four o'clock and I thought he had said “in the library”—but now it was four-thirty. So I took my hat and stick and went up the hall to the great lounge, arriving quite unexpectedly in the midst of a crowd of people at tea there—just in time to hear a tall lady say, “How very amusing!” and to hear the doctor cry, “Ah, here he is now! I thought you'd deserted us. I want you to meet Mrs. Bryce.”

And now the lady in black—tall, slim, dark, and very cognizant—was saying, “But you mustn't go away without seeing the island. Are you busy to-morrow morning? Come have a bit of bread and cheese with us. Shaw has been there any number of times, you know—he wrote

Saint Joan here at the Eccles last fall—and ‘A. E.’ has spent weeks and weeks there painting.”

“‘A. E.’—whom George Moore could say nothing unkind about . . .”

The Irish lady’s eyes sparkled. “Ah yes. *Hail and Farewell*.¹ What a wonderful book—and terrible.”

“Tell me,” I asked eagerly, “was it true? Or was it distorted?”

She hesitated a moment, then spoke out. “No—it was true. Absolutely true—but how brutal it was!”

“How did William Butler Yeats take it?”

“Ah well—Yeats is—Yeats.” The implication was—or, to be very exact, it seemed to me the implication was—that the Archangel Gabriel, chiming out sweet music on the walls above, would in no wise be discommoded by the whisperings of a suave and satirical Lucifer.

2

The following morning was calm, the sea, again at low tide, wore a surface of dark, clouded lacquer. The jade islands were Chinese jewels in their high settings of russet-gold kelp. With oars poised in air, a fishing boat hung beside one of them like a giant dragonfly. A lone duck flew along a vast parabola into the heather. Another group of fishers flung out and hauled in their circles of floats from the top of a small island where sirens should have been.

The lady greeted me cordially. “I hope,” she said, as

¹ *Ave, Salve, Vale*,—a Trilogy. In this book George Moore has taken certain biographical material and modeled it as he would a novel, riding over some of his friends roughshod.

we went up a path made rich by the scent of early roses, "I hope that you haven't heard the ridiculous story about our bringing boatloads of earth here from the mainland!"

"'Millions of boatloads . . .'" I quoted.

"Now where could you have heard that!" she demanded with some warmth. "I never knew anything so stupid!"

"It was an old woman coming over the hill," I said. "But it doesn't seem so bad to me. If a place were barren and one wanted to live there, why shouldn't soil be brought from anywhere?"

She looked at me imperiously and a little scornfully. (Evidently this was a subject of long standing and some delicacy.) "In the first place, there isn't land on the mainland to take away; in the second, the thing is too silly. I can't imagine any one doing a thing like that—except perhaps an American millionaire!"

"Whew! This isn't beginning very well," I thought. But in another moment she had forgotten her annoyance and was showing me a path so completely carpeted with fallen pink blossoms that in places it was entirely hidden from sight.

Before us, as we turned to the left, lay a formal garden of immediate, compelling charm, with a pool down its length which reflected no end of Byzantine capitals and antique figures of the East and the ancient West. A pair of Chinese watch dogs stood on guard before the portico of a small classically designed garden villa at the end of the pool.

"This is the bachelor quarters," said the lady, "and this is where 'A. E.' stays when he is here." I looked about the wide room with its fluted marble columns, its chaste, classical decorations, and its stone floors covered by the skins of tiger and bear and deer. Beyond one of the porticos was

the beauty of the formal garden. Beyond the other was the beauty of the sea. And I thought to myself, "If George Russell is the man of his poems, there are times when this spot would suit him very well."

"Its edges foamed with amethyst and rose
Withers once more the old blue flower of day . . ."

"He tells me he likes it here," went on the lady; "he has painted every nook and corner of the island."

"And that," I said, looking at certain indelible marks on the stone floor of the portico, "is where he cleans his palette."

She nodded laughing. "You must see the really lovely places I know so well here. This is the way to the secret garden. Shall I take you to the secret garden?"

As she went on before me raising her skirt a little to avoid the wet grass-tops, I became assured of an unusual phenomenon. The lady was wearing sandals—but no stockings! As I silently pondered this circumstance, with nothing more particular in my mind than the syllable "Lo!" she spoke again.

"The dew is so bad here on these paths that I wear no stockings—YOU SEE!" Upon which astonishing display of feminine occultism, I blushed an unseen blush, and from that time onward confined my admiration to the charm of columns Byzantine and Ionic.

3

About us, among colorful rocks, indigenous ferns, grew trees and shrubs of many hundred varieties. Here for more than three years, ninety men had labored to bring a

garden out of the rocky crags of the island, building, planting, transporting—blasting even—but all apparently under such perfect artistry of direction that man's hand had never opposed for a moment the artistry of nature.

When the lady of the island showed me the place where the great hall was to have been built, but which now, after the War, would never be built, it seemed to me that in all this beauty which had been drawn from the rugged rocks and the hidden soil pockets of the island, there was a richer imagery to one who had gone away than a great hall could have held.

No doubt she felt that too, for she told me with a certain pleasure that since the War she had been living with a friend of hers in the gardener's house, like one family with the gardener and the maid. Indeed, when luncheon was ready, we sat down at a long table beside the door of the gardener's simple dwelling—the two ladies, Michael Donohue the gardener, the very pretty, very shy little maid, and I.

"That is Shaw's place where you are sitting," said my hostess. She went on to tell of the things she had heard him say there, and of the brilliant, fiery play of ideas, rising like a winged flame above certain gatherings in which that astonishing commentator on men and gods (and sometimes women) had struck the first spark; of an actual élan, an almost physical impact of opposing theories and their discharge into verbal flashes of lightning, making for some the chaos less chaotic, but for others, the darkness dark indeed.

He loved the island and knew its moods. Then too, this was a place where an interviewer would not be popping up from beneath every rose bush, or swinging coyly down from every ginkgo tree.

"It is a pity indeed," said the gardener, "that Mr. Russell isn't coming this year."

"Oh, but I think he is," said the lady.

"Is he now!" said the gardener, his eyes lighting up.

"You like him then?" I inquired.

"Indeed I do!"

So "A. E." was not only a man about whom George Moore could say nothing ill, but whom Mike Donohue, the gardener, liked too.

"How does Mr. Russell feel about being put into a book?" I asked the lady.

"He doesn't mind, I think, although he does object to being quoted as George Moore quotes him."

"As a foil to Mr. Moore, do you mean?"

"Yes. He said to me, 'You can sue a man for forging your name to a check, but after all, you can't sue him for putting words into your mouth in a book. I admit I don't enjoy being made to sit there while Moore makes a long, brilliant dissertation, I coming forward in the pauses only to say, "Assuredly," "You are exactly right," "Quite so!"' " " "

The luncheon passed very pleasantly, and afterward we walked for a hour down other paths where strange trees and mid-Pacific flowers—thriving wonderfully in the warm, moisture-laden climate of Glengariff—made frames for blue islands and flying shafts of sunlight which blazed through the steaming mists of sea and shore. At last, with a great bouquet of red and white tubular flowers from the lady of the island for Mrs. Casey of Casey's Hotel, I returned by a small boat to the mainland. As I went across the fields, two old women coming along stopped and looked at the flowers.

"Is it from Garinish Island those flowers are coming?"

"Yes. They are originally from Australia."

"Australia! Now think of that!" exclaimed one. She

came closer and touched the flowers. "Would I be takin' home a bit of a twig wid me?"

"You would," I said, and gave her what I thought Mrs. Casey could spare without knowing it.

"I'll be showin' it to himself, just; and won't his eyes be bulgin' out now, wid lookin' at it!"

"Glory be to God," said the other.

KILLARNEY

CHAPTER VII

1

Six miles northward into the hills beyond Mrs. Casey's, there is a superlative view. The entire bay of Glengarriff spreads out to the south, mapwise and magnificent, while to the north rises a barrier of mountains which one looks eagerly upon, knowing that behind it—under a ragged blanket of rain which is constantly falling into tatters under the bluest of skies and constantly being torn to shreds by the sun—lie the much-beloved Lakes of Killarney.

The mountains here have an official name, without doubt; but I prefer the title which a shepherd told me.

"These," he said, "are the Toonel Mountains, so named from the toonel at the top of the pass."

2

There was a small house at the beginning of the tunnel, and as I went by, a young girl came out and smiled at me. And at the same time, I noted the black decorative entrance of the tunnel and two blue strips of the Killarney hills singing merrily beyond. No sooner had we traversed its wet, murky depth than it came to me that the tunnel should be painted—for there is a decided charm to the entrance of any promised or promising land. I would also have taken a wager that the tunnel had not been painted before—which, though perhaps not particularly in its favor from the stand-

point of art, at least removed it from the class of *Pharaoh's Horses* or *The Stag at Bay*. Speaking *entirely* from the standpoint of art, there was the girl who had smiled . . .

I went back.

"This is a cozy little house you have. You must enjoy living up here and seeing who comes out of the tunnel."

"Ah but it's a bit lonely being always in the one place and seeing the world go by."

"Still, there is a beautiful view."

"You don't see the view, when you see it every day, just."

"That's true. But it's very attractive. I wonder—could you put me up for the night?"

"Oh no," she said, "I'm afraid not. We never take any one for the night."

"You see, what I want to do is to paint the tunnel with that glimpse of the blue hills beyond. I wouldn't be any trouble. If you could give me a blanket, I'd sleep out there in that shed in my cart."

"Oh, we wouldn't let you do that!"

"Well, couldn't you possibly put me up then?"

But she continued to say no, no, no, until, all at once in a delightfully feminine way, and in exactly the voice in which she had been saying no, she said—yes.

Her father, she said, whose name was Patrick O'Connor, was a merchant who sold things along the road, and he would be coming home in the late afternoon. While I unhitched the wagon with the help of a younger brother, under the rapt attention of three very young sisters, the girl boiled some eggs and made tea, which, together with bread and butter, were very well taken indeed.

Then, just as I began to paint, it began to rain. If you think the sketch of the tunnel at page 62 is sober, I assure you that the day was more sober still, for the whole of

the sketch was painted in the pouring rain, with only the canvas itself half-protected by the covering of the donkey cart. The palette became a morass of oil and water and paint in which the brushes splashed around like men who had lost their way in a bog. I tipped it up occasionally and poured the mingled water and oil in a small cataract to the ground. The water which poured down my neck, however, did not splash off at all, but was absorbed like a river lost in the Gobi Desert.

Several hours later as I stopped painting, the westward sun broke through the outposts of the rain; but to the north, above the irregular, jagged line of black peaks which separate County Cork from County Kerry ran a long narrow ribbon of vapor—as though an express train of the sky had just passed above the tops of the crags leaving behind it a broad celestial trailer of steam.

3

The homecoming of Patrick O'Connor was certainly not all that might have been desired from his standpoint, for he found my cart where his should have been, a strange donkey in his stable, tied, no doubt, with his own horse's halter, and a strange man in the bedroom which was habitually occupied by not less than three of his children. Yet he greeted me in a voice tinged by nothing but hospitality, regretting audibly that he had not more to give in the way of comfort! But I stopped very comfortably over night in the little house at the top of the pass with himself and his four younger children and the older daughter, Molly.

A pretty girl, Molly. So pretty, that when I left in the morning, I felt moved to say (after the paternal manner of an ancient man) "Now, my dear, how much is it?" But

instead I said, "Now, my . . . er . . . um . . . , how much is it?"—which fell pretty flat. And I thought to myself, "No, it will be another twenty years before you can manage *that!*"

Then I thanked her for her kindness, and shook hands as long as is compatible with the most lenient of the various recent books of etiquette, and went on through the tunnel into the County Kerry, thinking a little regretfully, "What a fool a man is not to kiss every pretty girl he meets—because if it is done with any sort of style at all, the girl will like it. And as for the man himself, style or no style, *he* will like it."

I continued down into the hills, looking back occasionally in the vain hope that Molly O'Connor might appear against the tunnel's dark mouth. But she did not appear at all; so the best I could do was to swear a great he-blooded hundred per cent oath that I would kiss the next pretty girl I met.

Then it began to rain. During the two months' rain I had already experienced in that first week of travel, there had been no such downpour as this! So, with ardor well dampened, I devoted myself to my plodding helpmate, putting a gunny sack over her to keep off the worst of the torrent—to which she responded by a laying back of the ears, showing by that sign that all was as usual between us.

Thus onward to the town of Kenmare where, not seeing a good hotel through the rain, I chose a bad one.

4

So bad, in fact, that in the morning, with two young officers of the Free State's army, I waited in the coffee room until nearly ten without so much as a whiff of bacon—

which is the backbone of an Irish breakfast. It was a religious holiday, it seemed, and not only the maids, but mine host and hostess as well, had gone away to church. Would a hotel proprietor, we wondered, do better for himself in the Hereafter by having attended to the comfort of his guests or the comfort of his soul?

"That is another matter for you Free Staters to settle," I said.

"*Free Staters?*" repeated one of the others.

"Why yes. You hold commissions in the Free State army, don't you?"

"You haven't been in the country long, now, have you?" he countered, flushing a little, and smiling.

"No. But why do you ask?"

"Because you called us *Free Staters*. True enough, we are commissioned under the Free State—but it is the *National Army*, you see. When any of the Republicans want to insult us, they call us Free Staters."

"Now that's a strange thing, and an interesting thing," I said. "How do you explain it?"

"The point is, that we are all in favor of a Republic, you see. We don't want a Free State always. The only thing that we differ from the Republicans in, is the means of approach. We knew from the beginning that it would have to be accomplished by legislation—and the Republicans are beginning to see it that way too.

"The idea of our fighting England is ridiculous. Why, she could put ships with sixteen inch guns in our harbors, and what with aëroplanes and all, she could rip the country to pieces in an hour. The tough part is," he added, flushing a deep, apologetic maroon under his heavy tan, "that we have to take the taunts of the Republicans when ourselves as well as themselves are all for Ireland too."

I changed the subject, saying how fine their young enlisted men looked in the new olive green uniforms and shining buttons and belt buckles and leggings of red leather. The way they kept their gear showed good discipline, I added.

"You may be surprised to hear that none of us in the National Army has ever held a commission in any other army in the world."

"Then I don't suppose that there is as much distinction between your various ranks as in the British army."

"No, there is not," he said.

"I don't agree with you," announced the other young officer, "I think there is more."

"No, there is not," repeated the first.

"God in Heaven there is!" burst out the other. "*Did you ever try to get a girl at a dance where there were brigadier generals present?*"

5

But now it was more than time to be on the way to Killarney. And shortly, here was the road under our feet again, and another rain-swept, fog-shrouded journey into the hills, where one went along like a disembodied soul through a day that might have been a segment of the great spiral which is eternity. Toward evening, however, the sun, like the staunch brigadier that he is, had left off dancing behind the balconies of the rain, and came forth, smashing the enemy clouds into wisps of broken regiments.

And there before one's eyes were enough light-swept green hills, and cloud-swept purple hills, and retreating storms, and billowing cumuli, and blue sky (all mackerel-striped

and feathery), to last Leon Bakst and Norman-Bel Geddes and Joseph Urban in stage effects for a year.

Then an obviously English family came past in a large motor car, and I nodded to them in a friendly way as is the custom of the Irish road, but they stared back frigidly and went on with frozen backbones. I wondered what was going on inside that particular group of particularly insular minds—for all Englishmen are not like that by any means.

Down some vast, incredible vista of a hundred million years, would mortals some day, under the cold twilight of an ashen sun, be able to penetrate beyond the physical unreality of a donkey cart to the reality of their brotherhood with a donkey man?

But just then I stubbed my toe on the Killarney road and knew damned well that they wouldn't. And simultaneously it occurred to me that if the present donkey man understood a little more about his fellows, he wouldn't be demanding a friendly nod from an English family traveling through Ireland at a moment so near the recent time of unpleasantness.

There were, it seemed, a great many things to remember and a great many things to learn before one could sit on a lotus leaf with legs crossed in one's lap and feet practically in one's vest pockets, contemplating Good and Evil with perfect composure.

Suddenly to the left, out of a great abyss, rose the back of a mighty dromedary of a mountain, with the anatomy of his fore and hind legs very plainly marked by ravines, and his neck and head lying along the ground. Farther away to the right, with her prone head facing south toward her mate, was another vast dromedary; and between the two,—as though the pair had settled themselves in a sedgy, watery marsh—the Lakes of Killarney.

I think it is worth while going to Killarney (if for nothing else) just to see Muckross Abbey. Mr. Maurice R. Moriarty, who guards and serves the Abbey with his life's blood, as his father did before him, thinks so too.

He will, if you press him, show you a photograph of himself in the Abbey with Mr. George Bernard Shaw—Mr. Shaw seated and looking up at Mr. Moriarty, while the latter stands fore-square, facing the camera with a brow like a thunder cloud. Under the picture is printed, "G. B. S. and I."

"You look very serious," I said, as he showed me the photograph.

"Ah yes. I looked that way because I was afraid that it would get into the papers—and it did, too!"

"There isn't anything so terrible about that, is there? I'd be perfectly willing to appear in the papers with Mr. Shaw."

"*But it got into the American papers!*" he said with bated breath.

"Ah, that *was* bad. But have you a guide to the Abbey?"

He produced one for sixpence which he himself had written—the best local guidebook both as to the information which it contains and the English in which it is clothed, to be found in Ireland.

". . . the bridal party entered the ruined Abbey where the Altar still stood, defaced and broken. The moon was shining on the desolate walls and through the broken windows, colouring with its pale light, shattered pillar and roofless aisle. The light of day might not witness the marriage of MacCarthy Mor's daughter with the son of Mac-

Carthy Reagh, himself the lord of broad ancestral domains . . . no harp sounded, no clansman raised a joyous cheer, no banner waved, no spear or battle axe gleamed; only the pale moonlight streaming through the roofless choir . . .”

And again—“Although the Friars were often banished, the hallowed traditions of the Franciscans of Muckross were never allowed to die. The nineteenth century saw a branch of the Order established again in Killarney, where the beauty of the modern Monastery almost rivals that of Muckross of the olden time. In the streets of our pretty southern town, the sandalled Franciscan with his coarse brown habit and tonsured head is a familiar and venerated figure. Sometimes they may be seen like exiles visiting a home that once was theirs, wandering around the precincts of the ruined Abbey, suggesting thoughts of bygone Muckross and Ireland’s past.”

That, Moriarty, is good work. You have caught in a gentle, old-time net of words the mellowed spirit of the Abbey itself.

It is a small, gem-like ruin—the Abbey—a cameo cut sharply into the centuries, perfect both in detail and in setting. Guidebook in hand, I wandered for an hour through cloister and dormitory and chapel, and back into cloister again, in the center of which, as Thackeray said, a wonderful yew tree darkens the whole place into a perpetual twilight.

All at once the vagrant sun dropped a few splashes of dazzling white into the cloister between the yew tree and the old walls—and suddenly the cloister became not only something to ponder over, but to paint!

As I sat at work, the sound of well-modulated voices drifted in through the tall gothic windows, and here was the

owner of the Muckcross demesne with guests from the house, all immaculately clad, and talking (between exclamations of delight over the Abbey) about Deauville and the cures and the Riviera.

At an opportune moment, I presented their host a letter from the lady at Glengariff. After we had talked of various matters, he said, "Come to dinner with us tomorrow night at the house."

"That's very good of you. But—what with traveling the way I am——"

"Clothes? Come ahead anyway! It doesn't make any difference. There will only be a local doctor from Killarney with us. We dine at eight."

7

In the great hall, the butler confronted my gray tweeds, not with cold hauteur, but with well-hidden perplexity. This apparition of gray tweeds at the dinner hour may never have occurred in his experience before. I gave my name with a firmness which I did not entirely feel.

"Are you expected, sir?"

"Yes, I am."

"Please step this way, sir."

We journeyed past trophies of the chase and massive portraits, down an endless baronial hall toward the door of a drawing room which Louis Quatorze himself would have felt no *abaissement de souveraineté* at entering. But the thought of Louis Quatorze at that moment was absolutely no help to me at all. We have so little in common, Louis Quatorze and I. My father's people are Quakers. Sometimes for lunch, I eat crackers and milk.

I soothed myself with the thought that there would be

only three of us—my host, the doctor from Killarney, and I.

Alors! As Mr. James Stephens would say, "Here are ladies!" Ladies in cloth of silver and tulle. Ladies, lovely and languorous. Gentlemen, of course, in dinner jackets. And as for the "local doctor from Killarney," he was also a member of that august national body, the Dáil!

But once perceived, these were matters immediately to be dismissed. In a short moment we were at table and a disembodied voice was saying sweetly, "Sherry or brandy, sir? . . . Rhine wine or claret?" and our host was remarking that a telegram had come a few minutes before, and that he was sorry Yeats couldn't be there as he had expected.

"William Butler Yeats?" some one asked.

"Yes." He read the telegram, "Cannot get away. Very sorry. Yeats."

"What is he so busy about?"

"He has a great deal to do, now that he has gone into politics. And he is writing the invitations to certain distinguished foreigners who are expected in August for the National Games at Dublin. 'First I have to compose the letters,' he says, 'and that takes a lot of concentration; then I have to address them and that takes a lot more concentration; then I have to put on the stamps, and so far, I haven't had enough concentration for that!'"

"What is going to happen when the guests arrive?"

"Oh, they are to be taken to see the Games. One of the days, they are coming down here. But I'm afraid they will all be poets! How are you going to entertain a houseful of poets!"

Some one made an eloquent gesture toward the decanters.

"That was a charming book of Mr. Yeats' poems you gave me to read today," remarked a not less charming lady across from me. Now I might have known from the form of her

remark that she did not know much about the work of Mr. Yeats, which is neither to her credit nor to her discredit. But instead, like some pedantic mooncalf out of Alice in Wonderland, I said, "Which one of Mr. Yeats' poems do you like best?" intending, I have not the slightest doubt, to tell in a moment which one *I* liked best.

But she only looked at me with the sweetest smile imaginable and said a little vaguely, "Yes, that was a charming book of Mr. Yeats' poems," while I, simple mole, kicked myself sharply under the table.

However, the Member of the Dail had launched into a story, which, he said, explained the Irish character better than any other that he knew:

Back in the sixties, when Ireland was fighting off her landlords, the best way of getting rid of them, it seemed, was to shoot them. So two Irish tenants on a certain estate were told off to go out and shoot their landlord.

As it was the latter's custom to return home by a certain road each night at nine, the assassins ambushed themselves near the path within easy gunshot. Nine o'clock came, but no landlord. Ten . . . eleven . . . twelve o'clock.

"Now what can be holdin' him away, I wonder?" remarked Dennis.

"Ach, the poor old man! I hope he hasn't met with an accidint!"

A ripple and roll of laughter; then the conversation divided itself into small, frothy sections and, like foam dancing on the edge of a wave, rolled gayly on and on. . . .

If you go to Killarney, wait I beg you, for a day of sunlight and cloud, and take the "long trip" by coach and saddle

horse and boat through the Lakes and the Gap of Dunloe. If the day is right, you will sample in a few hours much of the best of the varied scenery which the south of Ireland has to offer. The Killarney landscape may not be particularly august or splendid or imposing, but there is deep tenderness about it and an indisputable charm.

You may see some pleasant, homely thing like a goat philosophically scratching his nose on the rope which holds him—which will make you forget that the town of Killarney isn't even within sight of the Lakes. And when you get to the top of the pass at Dunloe, there will surely be an old man to say, "This is the next parish to Heaven, and as high as I'll ever get." There will also be others who will want you to listen to an echo or buy a postcard or take a drink of milk-and-"mountain dew":

"If Anacreon—who
Was the grape's best poet,
Drank our mountain dew,
How his verse would show it!"

And if you buy so much as twopence worth of their wares, you will receive the best of a very valuable blessing: "Thank your Honor; a long life and good luck to you always."

Or you may hear how "the Colleen Bawn,¹ a duck of a girl, was done to death by a little humpy man, she being thrown into the lake near a big stone which bears her name."

And when you remonstrate and say that the Colleen Bawn was not drowned at Killarney at all, but far to the north in the River Shannon near Glin, the teller of the story may shake his head a little perplexedly and say, "At least, I

¹ i. e., the blonde girl.

saw a play of it on the lake there, and it was grand altogether. There was a bit of a lad put on a handsome pale of hair, he being all dressed up like a girl. And in the middle of the play, the boat was near capsizing, and he fell overboard and almost drowned, and the manager was for hitting him over the head with an oar, he was that mad."

Or it may be that in the evening you will take a small boat out to the lovely island of Innisfallen with its ancient ruin of the monastery where Brian Boru was educated so that later he might bring all the south of Ireland into one. There are strange, primitive faces carved over the doorways of the monastery, and arches so ancient that they have no keystones, and a holy water font, which, even in the driest of weather is not without water, and the tomb of an old abbot, hidden to all but the keenest observers, under the roots of an ancient yew.

Killarney! In spite of its commercialism, in spite of the fact that one is only a golden sponge to be squeezed as dry as possible and passed on, this traveler at least must remember it as a spot of innocent and strangely-compelling charm.

There is another traveler who should remember it too. Being feminine, she will perhaps recall it best by the fact that on the day she left Killarney, she was wearing a brand-new leather collar, bearing upon each side two little, shiny, brass hearts.

DINGLE BELLES

CHAPTER VIII

1

WE started off, not only with a new collar but with grease on our wheels. We started with an improved wooden "straddle" for Herself's back. There was also grease on the groove of the straddle, grease on the sliding chains, and grease on my raincoat. If I had earlier found how much better an animal will do for a good night's housing, I had now learned, as with another awakening light, how much better that animal will travel if one makes it comfortable at the very beginning of a day's journey.

At a rise of the road, I turned for a final glimpse of the Killarney country. Crisp rolling clouds and a windswept sky. Below, the deep-ultramine hills. A transfiguration of light, shining down upon a little Irish farm, with dark, feathery trees and a hilltop beyond . . .

There came to my mind a little Irish poem I had read, and I went on, neither whistling nor saying any word to Herself, because of the little house, and the poem, and the great yearning Irish sky.

"Four ducks on a pond
A grass bank beyond
A blue sky of spring
White clouds on the wing:

What a little thing
To remember for years,
To remember with tears."

A man was coming up the hill with a powerful horse and a load of peat. When we met, he stopped and asked for the loan of a match.

"Will it light without the box?" I asked as he took one (because his request for a match had brought down the rain, which is very delicately adjusted all about Killarney).

"It will!" he said vociferously. "It will light in the middle of an English swamp—for it was made in Ireland." And I went on chuckling, for after all, a match might easily light in the middle of an English swamp without lighting in that submerged Killarney weather.

To the left, veiled by gray and grayer and still grayer tones of mist, were the vast, uprolling sides of many pyramidal hills, each parallel to the others, hill beyond hill fading away into the distance, and above them a mighty cloud, sweeping like the wings of victory in a wide, majestic curve along their crests.

Then I came to a house where an old woman sat in the doorway smoking a pipe, and this was the first old woman I had seen smoking, so I stopped and passed the time of day with her saying, "Good-day, mother; this is queer weather we're having."

"It is. The spring has come back on us. And is it fishes you're selling?"

"No, I'm just on a holiday——"

"Glory be to God!"

"—from America, and——"

"Glory be! Wisha for *goodness* sake!"

"I thought I'd stop and bid you good-day because you are

the first of the womenfolk I have seen smoking a *dhudeen*."

She removed the pipe and gave a toothless, elliptical cackle. "All the young girls do be smokin' now! Is it like that in America?"

"Like that, and worse. But how far up the road is Tralee?"

"And is it right out of America you come?"

"Yes, from New York City."

"*My! You're plain for an American!*"

"Ah yes. We can't pick out our own faces, you know. This is the road to Tralee, isn't it?"

"It is indeed. Follow the straight road about six miles."

I said good-by, and went back to the road. . . . Did the old girl think we were all Adonises and Valentinos across the water? Just what did she mean, I wondered. "My! You're plain for an American!" If she thought I was plain, I could show her a few others who . . .

Ah well . . . Only six miles more to Tralee. . . .

2

No sooner had I acquired the grateful privacy of a hotel room in Tralee after twenty-two weary miles of mud and rain, than there came a sharp, decisive knock at the door. Opening it I looked out into the passage directly over the head of a little man who was standing there.

"How do you do, sir! My name's Billy Whelan. I'm a fellow-countryman of yours; that is, I'm a soldier of fortune, originally Irish. Been all through the trouble here. Captured, tortured, on the run . . . I understand you're writing a book on Ireland. Are there ladies in it? There ought to be!" His merry birdlike eyes, one of which was hazel and one brown, peered out at me from under a thick

curly bang of black hair. His face was round, red, and moist. He stood straight as a ramrod and not much taller. His jolly manner prohibited formality.

"Come in," I said. "How the deuce did you hear that I was writing?"

"Oh, through a traveler coming up from the south. I'm a bit of a writer too. I'm small, you see, but I'm an important person. In America, I traveled all around with de Valera as his secretary, making speeches too. We ought to get together. Will you be here tomorrow?"

"No. I expect to run out to Dingle in the morning by train. But I shall be back in a day or two."

"That's right. See you later. Keep on smiling!" And with that, this astonishing atomy reached up and patted me on the top of the head!

As he closed the door again and I sat down abruptly, there rose before me the memory of two colored porters I had once heard talking together as they left the dining car after their hurried meal.

"Well," said one, "how does you feel now after *that*?"

"Friend," answered the other, "I doan' feel so good—but I'm heavier!"

However, I liked Billy Whelan.

3

Pig market, it seems, is only once a month in Dingle. On that day come pig dealers even from Cork and the farthest frontiers of Kerry. Here are assembled all the youth and beauty of pigdom—pigs and piglets of surpassing porcine loveliness, fairly bursting with breakfast potentialities.

No wonder they squeal, and blush pinkly. Why not, in-

deed? They have less privacy than the now-proverbial goldfish. Those cold-blooded men who stand there so quietly are mentally stripping from them piece by piece their most cherished intimacies, from pork chops and bacon right down to the very marrow of their bones. The only thing about them that will not be of some commercial value is their squeal. Are they aware of that fact? Heaven knows, if they are, they make the most of it!

At the Dingle station are forty two-wheeled chariots of hysterical pigs awaiting deportation. But that is nothing to the galaxy of grunTERS drawn up below Benner's Hotel.

"What makes more noise than a pig under a fence?" Some may answer, "Two pigs under a fence," but there is a far better answer than that. It is, "Three hundred pigs in carts on the main street in Dingle."

There are other matters of interest out Dingle way—strange "bee-hive huts" and ancient churches, and legends of the Spaniards and the Spanish trade which flourished throughout the peninsula.

There is a story which relates that after the defeat of the Armada, one of the Spanish ships sailing down from the north was wrecked off Sybil Head, the survivors settling among the Irish and taking unto themselves wives. Certainly many of the people are of a dusky southern type, with eyes tipped up at the corners, eyebrows which meet in the center, sallow skin, and the mobile lips of Spain.

Another story tells that in 1590, eleven hundred Spaniards at Fort del Oro in Smerwick Harbor (see Charles Kingsley's *Westward Ho*) held off Raleigh's superior forces for five weeks, surrendering at last on the condition of freedom; and that Raleigh's men marched them to Sybil Head and pitched all eleven hundred off into the sea, where the tide carried some of them to the Blasket Islands—and

domestication. But I am afraid we shall have to call this story a legend, for according to the best historical records, the garrison was massacred to a man.

The transfusion of Spanish blood needs no such militant explanation. It is enough to know that the Spaniards always had a way about them, and that for several hundred years along this coast there was a thriving Spanish trade. Such names as were left have been absorbed into the life of the people.

I traversed the peninsula from end to end, but never a name did I find more Spanish than O'Hara, O'Sullivan and Flynn. If any man knows of any old Spanish names on Dingle, please let him write to me about it, and I shall put a footnote in the next edition of this book if there is one.

It is true that in the Blaskets, off the Dingle Peninsula, there is a family called Dunlevy—which *might* have been Don Levi. But one must retain a certain balance in these genealogical matters, otherwise he may shortly find himself making *Sous le vin* out of Sullivan or *Eau le roi* out of O'Leary; and then it will be high time for him to turn away from his studies, and run swiftly to the Glenagalt (Valley of the Lunatics) which lies a few miles eastward from Dingle town, in search of the healing waters of Tobernagalt (Well of the Lunatics) and the watercresses at Ahagaltaun (the Ford of the Lunatics) which in olden times, were thought to be specifics in such aggravated cases.

But it has been a long time since any madmen capered and frisked about the dale of Glenagalt. Once wild and desolate, it has fallen under the firmer, gentler spell of the spade and plow. Does the water of the well now have a soothing effect on the pleasant agrarian landscape about it, perhaps making the crab-apple trees less crabbed and the wild cherry not so wild?

How shall I, a stranger, answer these things? Far better for me to cleave to the following pronouncements, of which I am certain:

Item: That Benner's Hotel in Dingle town is one of those rare hostelries where the guest is an individual, not a room number.

Item: That the two young women who posed for the sketch at page 82 had never posed before.

Item: That while I was drawing them, seagulls were flying about the yard, which was a sign that we might have rain.

Item: That we certainly did!

4

The Rink, a long, barnlike hall, not handsome but capacious, was filled to the brim with the theater-goers of Tralee. The footlights were electric, and the curtain bore a large fancy picture of a stag standing up to his hocks in whipped cream and baying at a mountain of raspberry sherbet. Exhilarating sight! Were I a stag, I should have bayed too! But no time for that. Up went the curtain disclosing a tiny woodland stage, with a chorus of four slips of girls in discreet tights—two as youths and two as themselves—going through the conventional chorus-girl motions of fifteen years ago with such fresh naïveté and charm that one spectator who had felt no great vehemence over chorus girls for at least five years must needs hug himself with delight.

Then the caste came trouping in, the ingenue, the fond father who kept a prosperous shop, the villain, the comedian and his mate.

("Micky, your coat is too short!")

("It'll be long enough before I get a new one.")

And now before one's eyes, unfolded the jigging, hilarious caricature of an old-time musical comedy, *all Irish*, and tripping over the rough boards with a sprightliness and a sparkle which the original could never have known.

Here was the prima donna, "Dick Whittington himself" with his cat. *What* a girl! I suppose it is from just such road companies as these that the best of the London reviews are recruited. At any rate, here was a young woman with a charming profile, fine eyes, excellent full face, and a perfectly lovely body, saying in a rich, unspoiled contralto voice, "Here I am on my way to London without a penny, and without a friend in the world—" As she sang her songs and went quite simply through her lines, it was easy to see that quite without knowing it, she had a quality which stage folk call personality.

Then—since I had no review of the play to write, and since I confess without the slightest compunction, to an unfailing pleasure in feminine charm—the rest of the company, except the Irish comedian, slipped quite out of sight. And when at last *the* girl sang a song about the open road, I took out a card and wrote on it, "Requesting to see Dick Whittington for a moment," and put it away again for use in the near future, feeling quite devilish.

But now the curtain had gone down on the first act, and a little, disjointed man with a huge mustache was making a speech.

"Leddies and Gen'l'men: I take this opportunity of sayin' a word to you (which will be followed by the second act and the Grand Finale by the entire company).

"Tomorra evenin' we will present for your pleasure that ever-poplar pantomine, 'Beauty and the Beast.' And I wish to add that just because it's goin' to be the last night,

it will not be given in a slipshoddy manner but will come off *as usual*.

"I also take this opportunity, leddies and gen'l'men, to extend to you my heartfelt thanks for your order and patronage. This bein' our first visit to Tralee, and you bein' so generous-hearted, I assure you that when we leave, it will be with every intention of comin' back next year.

"In case you can't get around tomorra night, I thank you heartily for your kindness durin' our stay, and I wish you the best of luck. Yours, Sylvester."

5

And now, even the Grand Finale is over. As the people file out, I give my card to the violinist. In a few moments "Dick Whittington," clad in soft feminine garments, her light hair charmingly disheveled, comes out to me alone. We sat down in the empty front row.

Marie Lawler, she says her name is. Oh yes, Irish. She had played everywhere—once in London, and once even as far away as Morocco in a town they called Casablanca; and in 1914, she and the company with which she had been playing were war prisoners for three months in Belgium. No, she hadn't been very frightened, not frightened at all, in fact. She had been very young then. It was an Adventure . . .

I wish I could reproduce the charm of this Irish girl of the road. At any rate, when I told her she was to be in a book, she laughed and blushed with pleasure and said, "Do you mean a book that will really be published?"

"Yes," I said, "unless I die or something."

She looked at me as though I were a bird of some unusual

species, and put back her head, and laughed just for the fun of it and because she was young.

"I'd like to get the words of that song you sang about the open road. It appealed to me because I'm traveling the road too, and——"

"There! I knew it! I *knew* I'd seen you. I saw you the other day on the road from Killarney!"

Then I looked at her as at a rare and valuable species of bird, and suddenly, the memory of her face too came flashing back out of a forgotten motor car.

"Certainly you can have the words. I'll write them out for you. And she did write them, beginning

*I'm on the road to anywhere
With never a heartache and never a care*

right through to the last gay-hearted line which says,

The road to anywhere may lead to somewhere—some day.

So I thanked her, and under the persuasion of the moment I said, "Be sure to let me know when you come starring to New York!"

"I will," she answered, laughing gayly again. And then, since both of us had our far roads to travel, we said good-by.

6

I stood again in the hallway of the small hotel in Tralee looking without any high degree of pleasure at the table which had been set for me in the front room. Evidently I was to take tea alone. Through the open door of the back room came the sound of talking and laughter. At the same

time came a glimpse of a number of young men and women seated around a table.

"That's where I would like to be!" I thought, turning a little disconsolately at the isolated splendor of the front. But at that moment the maid approached and said, "Would you rather have tea in there or in *there*, now?"

"In *there*," I said.

They were silent at first, those young people, and a little shy. In the first place, I was an American, and therefore a symbol (Heaven help us) of much excellence. In the second place, I might be a returned Irish-American, and in that case, I was more than likely to be very well aware of all our American excellences; so for that reason, their Irish silence was also mixed with a little Irish pride.

Therefore it was, "Will you kindly pass the bread?" and "Thank you"; and "Is Mr. Whelan in?" "No, but we expect him a little later."

I remarked after a pause, that Mr. Whelan had had quite a time of it during the Republican trouble, and they said yes, that was true. There had been a lot of trouble in Kerry. In Tralee especially. Perhaps I had seen the cross to Georgie Shea and seven others who had given their lives for the Republic on March 6, 1923—a year earlier?

Yes, I had seen it along the road from Killarney.

And in the earlier trouble, the trouble with England, it had been only a few miles away on Tralee Bay that Sir Roger Casement had landed a large consignment of guns and ammunition for the rebellion.

Thus the conversation began, and soon they were talking away for dear life on matters which interested them—matters which interested me too—for these young people were Republicans. Six of the men around that table had fought with the Republican forces or Irregulars as they were called,

and all six had served terms in prison. One, the son of the house, a studious-looking lad with a fine forehead and the eyes of a seer, had been only fifteen when the Free State "put him away" for a year and nine months.

He showed me with great interest some photographs he had taken in prison, the only photographs that were taken, as far as he knew, by any prisoner during the trouble. He had smuggled them out in the handle of a grip which had been ripped open and re-sewed after the films were inserted.

A lawyer at the table beside him had just been released that day—after eighteen months of prison. He looked a little pale, but nevertheless seemed well and vigorous.

"The families which suffered most during the Black and Tan time," said one of the young women, "are the families who are suffering most now."

"How do you explain that?" I asked.

"They suffered under the English because they wanted a Republic, and now they are suffering under the Free State because they still want a Republic."

"Just what do you mean by suffering? The Free State isn't imprisoning men now, is it?"

"No, not many. It is mostly a matter of labor. There's no work to be had by Republicans."

"It must have been an inspiring thing though, to be fighting for the best that a man knew."

"Yerra," said a sturdy youth beside me, "once you got a clout over the head with the butt of a gun, all the romance ran out through your ears."

But here was Billy Whelan standing in the door with a young woman in a dark cape and a saucy tan hat.

"Whew!" said Billy Whelan, "I've just come up the street where I bled. It gives me the creeps still. They blew my cap off with a bullet and pinked me all the way to jail with

a bayonet . . . But how did you like Dingle? I was in charge of Dingle for the Republic—had a garrison there. If any one looted, I'd shoot him dead. Oh, this is Mollie Myles. A good girl! Go sit by him, Mollie. There's a girl you ought to paint! A very *nice* girl, isn't she?"

In the course of the evening, I learned—but not from Mollie—that this small, quiet girl had been "on the run" with the Republicans too, and that she had gone through any amount of hardship with them. Once, for several hours, she had lain, revolver in hand, between a Free State armored car and a Republican armored car which were doing battle. She had lost one brother in the Republican trouble, and another was so badly shattered that he would never walk without a limp again.

Irishmen were harder against Irishmen than the English had been, they said.¹

"Did you know Michael Collins?" I asked of Billy Whelan.

"Know him! I've slept with him! Before I went for the Republic, he said to me, 'Billy, I've won a war! I've got the clergy back of me.' He was a good man, a good organizer—but the power went to his head."

Mr. Wm. Whelan could not bother with an obituary for long, however, even if it were his own. His high spirits kept the table busy.

"In jail they got us up four or five times a day and twice as many times a night. At twelve of the night, mind you, the troops would come in and dig us out and rush us around the yard like bulls in a pen—just to make us sign a statement that we wouldn't take up arms against the Free State.

¹ This is one of those statements which, as is suggested in the preface, must be looked at with clear eyes. The last "trouble," being the most vivid, will usually seem the worst.

Only twelve signed out of two hundred and seventy . . . But it wasn't as bad as being 'on the run.' That was terrible."

"It was fine," said Mollie Myles. "It was life and there was no hypocrisy to it. It was a true thing, even in death . . . Jack Garven . . . I'll never forget the morning we found his body."

And later, when the talk ran high on an alleged attempt of the government to eliminate the Labor-Republican ideas by force and to use the military in the interest of employers, she said to me, "There's been mis-statements and connivance on our side as well as the other, remember. Don't let us give you a rotten idea of the Free State . . . Sure, it must have been hard."

"You're right, Billy Whelan. This *is* a good girl."

But that obstreperous wight was not listening. Having nothing else to do, he had begun a classic account of Pyramus and Thisbe.

"Thisbe was very fond of Pyramus. Sometimes she said he was the most beautiful boy in Babylon. Sometimes, she merely called him her good old Chaldean spud . . ."

7

Politics again—and, like nine-tenths of all politics, not matters for political surgery but for political dermatology—the importing of foreign trusts, the exporting of government orders for clothing to England; talk which was all strongly tinged—in spite of an evident wish to be fair—with the Republican bias.

As they talked, there came to me the memory of the good men of the Republic who had died, and the good men of the Free State who had died, and the thousands and thousands

who had died for Ireland in the last seven hundred years, right down to the small, isolated cross of Georgie Shea and the seven others which I had seen at the side of the Tralee road. Politics or no politics—whatever their lesser conflicting truths had been, their greater truth was—Ireland.

But now Billy Whelan was speaking of de Valera. With a precision I had not expected, he outlined the latter's strangely visionary plans, closing with the sentence, "Eamon de Valera is a great statesman."

A protest rose to my lips. "Look here," I said, "de Valera may be a fine scholar and a good man. But when you say that he is a great statesman, I think you are wrong; for an inherent quality of a great statesman is the capacity to carry his purposes through."

"De Valera," he answered, "was never greater than on the day he refused to accept the Treaty. It gets down to a spiritual question. His failure was his success. Do you understand?"

"That doesn't make him a statesman," I said.

Now I, the most unpractical of men, not only understood but found myself in the humorous predicament of arguing against the very sort of thing for which I would generally stand. However, there was nothing left for me but to brazen it through.

"What you Irish lack," I said, laughing at myself within, but with an impressive frown without, "is practicality."

"When you say that, you hit the soul of Ireland *right on the nose!*" agreed Billy Whelan solemnly.

A PRIEST, A KNIGHT AND A WOMAN

CHAPTER IX

1

It was on the road from Tralee to the Shannon that I saw for the first time, and for the only time in Ireland, an example of that venerable institution known as "pigs in the parlor." To be perfectly just, it was not pigs but a pig—a very small, neat pig, who obviously did not live in the parlor, but who had wandered in after what he could find in the way of loot.

Being considerably intrigued by the sight, I stopped at the house and asked for a match. Within the door sat an ancient, angry man with a tattooed star on his hand, the first thoroughgoing misanthrope I had met in Ireland.

"How do you do today?" I inquired.

"Oh, I can't bawl," he said, "but it's rain, rain, rain all the time. I never remember anything so wet or wicked as this summer. The country's destroyed entirely. She ought to have four high walls about her and a roof, and then let fill with hay and be burned up with all the squealin' pigs and people."

"That would be pretty tough on one of the finest countries to be seen in the temperate zone," I protested.

"Oh, the *landscape's* all right," he agreed. "I've been around too, for when I was a young feller, I always believed in wanderin'. What nicked me was the Fiji Islands. I got malarly there and I ain't been pleasant since."

"The Irish are the most hospitable people I have found anywhere in the world," I said, speaking true words.

He took a long, deep, preparatory breath. "You're wrong," he said. "It's a bloody, bigoted, piebald, stiff-necked race they are, and what they want is a good drivin' in; for all the best do be dead and gone and the rest of the bloody country is sittin' in their catamarans barkin' at the cockatoos!"

Returning to the safety of the road, I noticed that the outside of the house was covered with magnificent red roses. As I was about to give Herself the signal for advance, a woman's voice called, "Would you be carin' for a rose now?" and an old lady with a pair of rusty shears in one hand and a rose in the other came down the path.

"Sure it's a bad time I have with the colleens, savin' any roses. *You mustn't mind now, what himself was sayin',*" she added in a low voice. "He was a bit addicted in his youth and now he's payin' for it with the pains. Well, you sow the wind and reap the whirlwynde. . . . Is the donkey cart your own projection?"

"It is; but let me thank you very much for the rose."

"It's an American Beauty," she said proudly. (I did not tell her that it wasn't.) "Would I take you for an American?" ¹

"Yes. I am from the United States."

Whereupon she looked at me hard and said, "*My—you're plain for an American!*"

Now this was the second old lady who had told me that I was plain for an American! Did she too think we were

¹ If America is mentioned with considerable frequency in this book, it is because of the great interest of the people of Ireland in America. The population of Ireland is something under four and a half million. It has been estimated that in America—particularly in the United States—the Irish and children of Irish number more than *nine million*.

all American Beauties over there? I made bold enough to say, "Yes, you'll find some very plain people in America."

"Is that so now," she said with interest and pleasure. "*Sure I'm glad to hear it.*"

I went up the road mystified. There was something about this "plain" business that I did not understand.

Then, as I walked on beside my small, well-groomed friend, pondering on that rather unusual old couple, I came unthinking to the top of the hill; and there before us, like the memory of something very far away, but very wistful and very dear, lay the blue valley of the River Shannon.

2

We stopped for the night not far from the Shannon at a small, poor village consisting of one squalid street, the cottages of which housed some two hundred people. We stopped there because the parish priest, whom I had met in Killarney, had promised to lend me a rare volume on Irish antiquities. There was no sign of an inn in the village, but after fumbling about for some time on the main street, we found shelter under the haphazard thatch of "a widow with six."

The priest, a man of something over thirty, with an earnest, rather petulant face, greeted me warmly with, "Now that was good of you to stop! Come right into the consistory." He led me into a quiet, dignified house beside the chapel wall, a house, which was in some contrast to the squalor of the village. "Here's a book I want you to take," he continued, "by Sir William Wilde, Oscar Wilde's father. He was a Dublin oculist, very well known as an antiquarian. His descriptions of the Boyne and the Blackwater are excellent."

We went into a bedroom overflowing with the glorious disorder of a scholar. Books were everywhere—barricading the table, stacked on the mantelpieces, rising in mounds from the corners of the room—philosophy, poetry, theology, but particularly, Irish antiquities.

He pounced on Petrie's book on Tara. "Read that page!" He dove into a stack and produced Wilde's book on the Boyne. "Read this!" He wrestled with a hundred pounds of literature and drew out a *Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquities*. "Read that!"

"It is easy to see what your hobby is," I said.

He looked at me frowning fixedly. "No, I can't let it be my hobby. I like it too well. . . . And you?"

"I like people," I said. "I find myself quite happy when I am studying human beings."

"But you mustn't neglect the antiquities of the land itself. That is a part of the people too." He went to the window and looked out, taking a deep breath. "It's fine again. We might take a walk. There are some ancient fortifications up the road, and some of the circular earthworks called *duns* . . ."

3

The velvety blackness of the hillsides rose about us. Overhead, the sky was aflame with stars. "Earth with the starry company hath part," I quoted; and under the cool abundance of the night, I praised the Celtic temperament, saying that with such faults as it had, there was also something splendid—a flare, a gesture, a virility. And as proof, I spoke of the Irish Renaissance, with Yeats and George Moore and the others. But as soon as I had spoken, I saw that my companion did not agree with me as to the examples I had chosen.

"Ah no—I must tell you that these don't understand the Irish people at all. For one thing, they want to get the priesthood out of the way, and in that they don't understand the Irish. They represent us as a body of men who are only after temporal things. They are hitting at us but are ruining themselves. I'll tell you something. The Irish don't read their work."

As I walked along beside the priest, we came to a crossing where there was a flat open space at the roadside, probably a depot for milk cans on the way to the creamery. Upon this open space whirled a confused, dancing, jostling mob of youthful figures, which at our appearance separated into integral parts and fled silently up the various roads into the darkness. I looked at my watch. It was eleven-thirty-five. There was something a little bizarre about our coming solemnly into that capering company.

"I suppose they will all be worried for a month that you should have come along," I said.

"Your presence has saved them," he answered. "They can slip away without being as worried as though I had come alone. They imagine that I am thinking and talking about other things. If I had been alone, they *would* have been worried . . .

"It isn't good, this sort of thing. Yet it is this that Moore and Yeats and a few of the others have written about, and some of the younger men too. There's been a book written by one of them about the Aran Islands. . . . Good literature? How can it be good literature when it casts a falsehood and a black slander on the people! . . . And after all, when a man writes what George Moore writes, it cannot dignify either himself or nature."

I went along pondering silently. There are many very sincere people in the world who think that George Moore's

Esther Waters is one of the greatest books in the English language.

"See—there is a *dun*—that great ring of earth at the top of the hill. You will find something very much like that at Tara. Wonderful how these monuments have lasted two thousand years—and in spite of the fact that people would really like to destroy them, for they are a menace to the cattle. It is said that the men who built them have turned into fairies and are protecting them."

We stopped for a drink of ale in the inner room of a public house at a village beyond the *dun*. "Are you sure this is all right?" I asked. "I wouldn't want to make you any difficulty."

"Ah no—it's all right. But of course, one doesn't come in very often. The last time I was in a public house was in December, although of course we have what we wish at our own table. If I came in alone, now, it would never do, for it might start gossip that I was a tippler. But with a guest, it is all right. It is the very thing to be done, in fact."

4

We were out on the road again, under the stars.

"Tell me," I asked, "what is the basis for the astonishing solidarity which I find in Ireland between the priesthood and the people?"

His answer was one of the most interesting expressions of opinion I was to hear in Ireland.

"The people," he said with knit brows, "the people . . . They're strong—oh God—how strong they are in their helplessness!" He put his hand to his forehead as though to remove a great weight. "These are the hard facts of my

own experience . . . A young priest starts out full of idealism and spiritual qualities. Then slowly, as he takes his place, he comes against the strength of the Celtic people, the strength of Celtic inertia. At first he does not understand. The people beat him down, they compel him to understand. In a strange way, their ideals are stronger and more vivid than ours. They demand a certain religion, and they *extract* that religion . . .

"It is the Celtic temperament that beats them—just as it beat Collins . . . Griffith . . . There is that in Ireland that beat Cromwell. Passive resistance . . . The Black and Tans too . . . That helplessness seemed to carry a sense of shame to the British forces. It rendered them helpless. It beat them. It beats all of us. The conviction that it leaves in a priest's mind is one of intangible inertia.

"But there is *this* we know too. The Irish are on the long, hard road. It is like a road to the mountain-top. They may seem to loiter along the road, but they will come back to it. The road up the mountainside . . ." He had forgotten me as we walked along through the darkness.

"And at the end of the road?" I asked.

"In that, we agree with the rest," he said. "*At the end of the road—is sovereignty.*"

5

The proportionate size of the River Shannon on the ordnance map should have given me a hint of its vastness. But such is the power of initial impressions and early associations that in spite of the ordnance map, I expected the Shannon to be a lovely, gentle stream tinkling along between flowery banks, with the boughs of trees shading it and

sometimes meeting overhead. In some ridiculous way, I had the Shannon all bound up with "flow gently, sweet Afton!"

Therefore, to come upon a river twice as wide as the Hudson at New York, or the Mississippi at De Soto, or the Wang Poo at Shanghai gave one the feeling of having been greatly misguided in one's youth by those who should have known better.

One's only consolation lay in the fact that the lower Shannon is not so much the Shannon as an arm of the Atlantic, with high tide and low tide even to the city of Limerick, fifty miles inland, where seven-thousand-ton ships bring their cargos from ports beyond the sea.

Turning eastward at the Shannon along a wide road bounded by woods and rolling farmlands on one side, and a river wall on the other, we came at last to the pleasant village of Glin. Here, on the eight-foot retaining wall beside the road, some one had printed in crude, white-wash letters three feet high:

£49000 FOR TIM HEALY, KING GEORGE'S BATMAN

Now at the time, Timothy Healy, a venerable, dignified, and somewhat aged gentleman, was Governor-General of all southern Ireland; while a "batman" is an army officer's personal servitor who polishes his boots, presses his clothes, and performs duties of even humbler nature. Therefore the thought of His Excellency springing about cricketwise among the multitudinous boots of the King caused me to stop the donkey and revolve the idea with some delight—and all the more because I knew that this sign would be a matter of considerable mirth to Irishmen of every party, including the Honorable Timothy himself.

The "£49000" had reference to the supposed annual profits of the Governor-General in fees, salaries, rentals, atonements, considerations, bonuses, graft, sweepstakes, premiums, and loot.

All along the road I had seen and was to see other signs in whitewash in which His Excellency's receipts fluctuated between £26000 and £50000 per annum, varying, I'm afraid, with the quality of imagination of the laddie who wielded the whitewash brush.

If I were putting on a revolution, I thought to myself, I should not spread propaganda with whitewash on a stone wall. The result is rough without being either strong or convincing. It gives eyes which are accustomed to the smooth banalities of posters and printed matter a sense of improvisation and insecurity.

Later, on a wall near Castleconnell, I saw a sign which read, "Remember the dead and vote for Crowley"(!) Another read, "Up De Velera." No doubt, there have been many men of great power who could not spell. (There are also plenty of others who can't spell.) *But if the members of any party wish to impress upon their opponents, or even upon well-disposed strangers, a sense of their efficiency, they had best learn to spell the name of their candidate for president correctly.

"Up the Republic." "Up de Valera." "Up Sinn Fein." The Free State has allowed these Republican slogans which cover the walls of southern Ireland to remain, until becoming grayer and grayer, they are finally obliterated by the Irish rains. . . . As I went up into the village of Glin, it came to me that among those who govern the Free State, there must be opportunity for the development of considerable restraint. And restraint among the Republicans too. For ideals, in Erin, have never been obliterated by the rain.

6

A memory which returns most readily from the journey eastward along the Shannon is that of the Knight of Glin, dignified, gray-haired, kindly, sitting at tea before shining andirons, and telling the story of the "Colleen Bawn," who was drowned within sight of Glin Castle, not half a mile from the village. (The Knight of Glin, sometimes called the Red Knight to distinguish his branch of the old Fitzgerald family, holds one of the few really ancient titles in Ireland.)

Eily O'Connor, known as the Colleen Bawn, daughter of a ropemaker of Limerick, had secretly married considerably above her station, a youth named Scandlin. The latter, tiring of her and wishing to remarry, persuaded one of his minions, Danny Mann, to drown the unfortunate young woman near a great, half-submerged rock on the Clare side of the Shannon.

It was the grandfather of the present Knight of Glin who investigated the finding of the Colleen Bawn's body, and who assisted the semi-repentant murderers in getting themselves hanged. If the justice of that time was in any way poetic, that concluding ceremony should certainly have been accomplished with one of her father's own ropes.

In any event, here at least is one old Irish story traced down to its original source. My host pointed out the portrait of the very ancestor who had interested himself in the affair.

Other portraits looked down from the high paneled walls. One showed an affable-looking young man in knee-breeches and a many-buttoned great coat receiving an important-looking document from the hands of a servant. This was

one of the most famous duellists of his time; so the portrait painter, being perfectly aware of the vanities of man, had painted the young fire-eater in the act of actually receiving a challenge!

"Perhaps his most famous duel," said the Knight of Glin, looking affectionately up at his young ancestor, "was one which took place in a public spot in Cork with another well-known swordsman of the day. After they had been at it for some time and were nearly exhausted, an old peasant woman called out to my ancestor, 'Stick him where the pigs get it!' He followed her advice and found that his adversary was wearing a shirt of chain mail!"

"How did the duel come out?" I asked.

He smiled affectionately up at the portrait. "As far as my ancestor was concerned—not at all badly," he said.

7

Another Shannon memory carries me back to the small village of Askeaton fifteen miles eastward from Glin. There is neither hotel nor inn,¹ so shortly after arriving, I find myself standing on the doorstep of a little cottage asking a kindly-looking woman if she can take me in for the night. As I talk, I watch her face passing through various changes of expression, first of appraisement and shyness, then of doubt that her house will be good enough and a sort of wistfulness, right through to the beautiful, whole-souled response of her Irish hospitality and her motherhood to the stranger at her doorstep. And this is only one of many similar experiences, each to be remembered as long as one remembers Ireland.

¹ The *inns* in Ireland are usually "public houses" which have a few rooms for guests. Simple meals may be had, to order.

In the evening as we sit in the tiny kitchen before the age-blackened, smoke-darkened hearth with its crane and its kettles in which all the cooking for the large family is done, the woman tells me about her relatives in America and asks about mine in Ireland. But I confess that I have none, for my people have been in America for two hundred years.

"Two hundred years! Think of that, now! Faith an' it's a long time, two hundred years." But a few moments later when the conversation has gone on and we are speaking about Limerick, which I hope to reach tomorrow, she interrupts with a glad light in her eyes, crying: "Why *acushla*, you're talking again the way you had only been gone out of Ireland a year or two!" Then a little girl comes in and tells me that tea is ready, and I go upstairs to the small, shabby living room in which there is a dilapidated piano. And while I am having my tea, a young boy of twelve is teaching a very little lad to play a song about men dying for a place they loved better than their lives. "C . . . E . . . that's it. B . . . E . . . B . . ."

So simply, so seriously——

8

For variation and charm in an Irish village, it is Askeaton which must have the shamrock wreath entirely.

Imagine yourself standing on a wide, green common along which a dozen sheep are cropping the tender grass. At one side of the common runs a straight Hollandesque canal, beyond which is a waterside street of tiny houses with red and green doors, houses in various hues of buff-colored calcimine, standing together in a row, like little old soldiers, against the dark foliage of trees. Now, as you

look, the sun behind you comes out from under a small cloud, glowing on the houses with that wonderful orange-red glory of the late afternoon; while down below in the canal lies the whole thing in reverse—light buff and tan walls with the sun flaming on them; green doors and red doors, dark green foliage, and the vivid blue sky, all glowing in the slow, sinuous water.

To your right, the canal—in reality the River Deel, a branch of the Shannon—passes with similar powers of reflection under a low, massive, four-arched stone bridge, which joins the sunlit village with a vast gray ruined castle on the nearer side, a castle that was the last stronghold of the great Desmond family.

To your left, at the far end of the meadow, you see the strange phenomenon of three swarthy, black-masted canal boats against the sunlit ruins of an old abbey. Beside these, at the meadow's edge near the grazing sheep, are the nets of fishermen, spread out on posts, while beyond appear the silhouetted outline of a series of low forts.

Back of you, bounding the meadow and rising a few feet above it, is a long, gray-green crag topped by an ancient wall over which the sun, cataract-wise, pours its resplendence upon the whole scene.

As I read again this description which I have asked you to imagine, there comes to me, as there sometimes must come to all of us who write, a sense of the futility of trying to mold even so obvious a thing as a landscape into words. True, the description may be done with care. It may even display a certain feeling for the medium of words through which it is expressed; but how far from the vivid splendor of the scene itself!

And yet to the man who writes there comes one enheart-

ening and comforting thought: that the minds of you who read, going generously and familiarly out to meet him, will through your vision, transmute his words again into all the beauty and richness of the reality.

LIMERICK AND "TIPP"

CHAPTER X

1

THE city of Limerick has suffered time without number from the unenthusiasm of those who, like myself, go through life squeezing out their brains into the pages of books. Most of them do not care for Limerick. They find it uninteresting and commercial. They find the people and the buildings all of a color. Like George Washington, they cannot tell a lie. They attack it with all manner of hatchets.

I like Limerick. I happened to arrive toward the evening of a fine summer's day when the sun was slanting its rays across the mighty blue curve of the Shannon, emblazoning the fortifications of King John of England, and gilding the great cluster of ships which carry flour and butter and salmon to the farthest cities of the British coast.

Racing crews were at practice on the wide blue river, singles, doubles, four-man shells, and eights. Three of the eights were being coached from motorboats by deep-voiced men with megaphones. The waterside avenues resounded to the laughter of merchants and their ladies, and merchants' assistants and their ladies. The side streets, sounding to the tramp of many promenading young people, rolled away into other dusk-shadowed thoroughfares of undeniable antiquity. Limerick at the moment, gave the impression of a university town which had grown up into a city of trade, and then forgotten its university.

It has had any amount of time to grow up, for it was the first incorporated town in Ireland. The Danes made it their capital in the 9th Century, but they were finally expelled in the 11th by Brian Boru. After that event it passed through enough vicissitudes to have discouraged another city more temperamentally inclined. But Limerick simply rolled up its sleeves, swept out the débris, and went back to such valuable and concrete considerations as have to do with the building of flour mills, and bacon curing establishments, and creameries.

As I loitered beside the Rowing Club's handsome building on the small island which also furnishes a mid-stream support for the great bridge, another loiterer informed me that the eight oarsmen in blue and gold who were at that moment flashing up the Shannon were the St. Michael's crew—"St. Mick's, we call 'em. And the cocksun is Mr. Murray; the owner, you might say, of one of the biggest shops in town. He's a fine class of man, too. That's the Cathedral up there, and beside it to the right, where that arm of the river passes under Mathew Bridge is the canal that goes all the way to Dublin. It takes about four days for the canal boats to get from Dublin to Limerick, full to the snoot with barrels of Guinness stout and porter. The porter is much better when it comes by boat than train. Doesn't get shook up so much . . ."

So we went on talking about this and that, and here and there, until at last my fellow-loiterer, looking at me sharply, said, "*Well—you're plain enough for an American!*"

Now by all the gods in the Irish cosmogony—there it was again! No woman to bother with this time. Man to man!

"Plain, am I?" I said coldly, restraining an impulse to chuck him, like the Colleen Bawn, into the Shannon.

"Indeed you are, now," he went on affably. "Some of our own Irish people come back from the States after a year or two away, and they pick up such a twist of the tongue that we can't understand them at all. But you are *very* plain!"

"Ah!" said I. So *that* was it!

The Shannon flowed silently on.

2

Off to Tipperary in the most voluptuous, red plush third class railway coach to be found in Europe. Outside, rain. Rain as though the Deluge had begun again—black, down-pouring, dismal, with never a ray of hope.

But before half an hour had passed, the Irish sun was shining again as gayly as possible, with nothing more to hide its splendor than the rounded backs of defeated clouds trooping off toward the horizon. Then into the coach came the Sweet Singer of the Great Southern, a black-browed woman with metal banjo strings and vocal cords, who stood between the compartments and sang about the old home in the County Down. She was, it seemed, quite as much a part of the service as the upholstery or the brakes or the train's whistle, and was the only singer allowed on the line. Her father, a station master, had died suddenly, I was told; and now she plied back and forth, never missing a train or a note between Limerick and Tipperary, and probably making as much per diem as any three station masters on the line.

At Limerick Junction, a keen, intelligent-looking young fellow in a blue rain coat came in and sat down by me. He was a native of Tipperary, he said, but had been teaching in Scotland and was on his way home for the summer

holiday. Did I know the Irish game of hurling? It was played with curved sticks and a leather ball, between goals at each end of a field. He had been captain of the hurling team for Scotland during the last four years—shinty, they called it in Scotland—and his team expected to play Ireland in the Tailteann or National Games which were to begin at Dublin on August second—the first national games to be held in Ireland for seven hundred years. . . . Well—here was Tipperary . . . quite a famous place for its athletes. . . . Matt McGrath, the world's champion weight thrower on the New York police force came from Tip . . . What hotel? Dobbyn's was the best . . . Good-by now, and good luck . . .

3

Tipperary was an attractive, business-like little town, with a spirit of gayety about it, and any number of well-dressed shop windows, and Pola Negri in *Mad Love*, and lads in the new uniform of the National Army with laughing Tipperary girls on their arms, and an amusement company with merry-go-rounds and fortune tellers and raffle stands in an open lot down the hill beside the railroad.

But I had come to Tipperary more seriously inclined. I had come hoping to make a sketch for this book of the crosses of the Tipperary men who had died in the Great War. Because of a song which we sang at the time of the war, it seemed to me that such a picture might have interest and poignancy about it. Of course, I could only speak for myself. I knew that the idea interested me.

So I went to the graveyard half a mile outside the town, and sitting down in a neglected corner before the row of seventeen shabby crosses which had been pointed out to

me, I got out my colors. Five times I began to paint. Five times, the wickedest of tangential downpours drove me to the doubtful shelter of a juniper bush. Soon it grew too dark for sketching. The caretaker came to close the gate.

"And why would you be wanting those identical crosses?" he asked. "There is a better view of the cemetery from the front."

"There was an old song that we sang during the war," I said. "*It's a Long Way to Tipperary*. We haven't altogether forgotten it, where I come from."

"They've forgotten it hereabouts," he remarked with a slow shake of his head. "All in all, the south of Ireland never thought very much of fighting for England. Besides, we've had any amount of troubles of our own between then and now. The Black and Tans . . . The Republic and all . . . There was even fighting and killing here when the barracks were burned."

"Then you don't think people are interested in these graves?"

"Sure it doesn't look that way. They are badly neglected, you can see."

So I went thoughtfully back to the hotel, and made some inquiries; after which, I made some further inquiries here and there about the town. And slowly it became clear to me that my intention to include a picture of the crosses in this book was the result of an almost purely personal point of view. I had been thinking not so much of Ireland, as of Irish lads who had stood beside me in a trench, and of a gay song which had come from the lips of marching men at times when the body would have faltered and sunk down under the weight of automatic rifle and pack, if it had not been for the spirit's magnificent authority to force that song and other songs from their lips.

I have spoken at some length about this matter of the crosses in order to show how careful one must be not to let one's own awards and valuations change the color of a book in which one wishes to see true. To have included a painting of the war crosses in the Tipperary graveyard in this book would have given them an emphasis to which, as a whole, the south of Ireland could not subscribe.

But now that this matter is clear, there is no reason for not including these lines which came to me—not as a raconteur but as an individual—on the road back to Tipperary:

*The way to Tipperary
Is long. But longer still,
Aye, queer and long, that longer way
Which led to yonder hill.
What silence, and what crashing sound,
What terrible, still cries . . .*

*Yet Tipperary and the world
Pass on with laughing eyes.*

4

The ruins of Cashel stand in splendid isolation upon a massive rock fourteen miles east north-east of Tipperary. That isolation is as perfect as any to be found in Ireland, for it takes three trains, two junctions, and a bad quarter hour with the lady of the banjo to go those fourteen miles from Tipperary to Cashel.

The Rock of Cashel with its ruined cathedral, castle, chapel, and round tower, is a great crag rising abruptly

from an expanse of farm country as fair as any to be found in Ireland. The summit of the rock is circled by a wall which not only incloses the massive pile of ruins, but also protects several acres of fairly flat hilltop which were used for games and drill by the ancient kings of Munster.

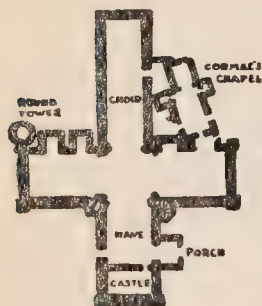
The finest of the interlocked buildings in the group is a small chapel founded by Cormac McCarthy in 1127 A. D. It is easy to believe that its erection and decoration took seven years, for its portals and pillars are richly ornamented with rough but basically sound design after the Gaelic school of the day.

The planning of the later and larger cathedral must have presented a severe problem for the architect.

On one side of the plot was Cormac's chapel, on another, the round tower, and on a third, the castle. If the architect were to make the cathedral "face" in the usual direction, that is, east, it would be necessary for him to do a very unusual thing. He did. Most cathedrals are built in this manner:



But the cathedral at Cashel is built like this:



The round tower beside the cathedral is some eighty-five feet in height; its rough masonry walls are four feet thick at the base while the circumference is fifty-one feet.

There it stands, mighty as Finn Mac-Cool himself, peering out over the Golden Vale for enemies that come no more.

What was the use of these great giants of masonry with their impenetrable walls and their conical wooden tops?

Were they decorative or useful? Religious or secular?
Peaceful or militant?

Some writers on the subject go so far as to claim that they are phallic in origin, like the minarets of the East. I do not believe it. One does not have to look at the illuminations of the Book of Kells or old copies of the Annals Tighernach to come to the conclusion that the ancestors of the Irish people didn't bother very much about erotic symbolism. Knowing the Irish of today, one would be vastly astonished to see on the walls of Cashel decorations which would be taken for granted on the walls of Pompeii. For the Irish in Ireland (with the exception of a few young writers in Dublin who have the idea of prurience confounded with the idea of integrity), are as clean-minded a race as the Norwegians or the Icelanders or the people of Montenegro.

In A. D. 445, St. Patrick came to Cashel and converted the pagan ruler, King Aengus, to Christianity. During the rite of baptism, the aged saint planted the spiked end of the crozier's staff on what he thought was the ground; but at the conclusion of the ceremony, he discovered much to his distress, that the metal tip had transfixed the sandalled foot of the king.

“ . . . The crozier's point
Weighted with weight of all that stately form
Had pierced it through. ‘Why suffer'st thou so long
The pain in silence?’ Patrick said grief-hearted.
And thus Aengus answered, ‘O, my Sire,
I thought thus called to follow Him, whose feet
Were pierced with nails, haply this blissful rite
Some little pain included.”

It is possible that this rigorous initiation had a salutary effect on the quality of the king's conversion, for he became

noted for his piety and learning. His descendants gave many bishops to the see of Cashel.

Decidedly Cashel is worth visiting. But unless you are an archæologist or an antiquarian, I warn you that you are likely to return to Tipperary or Limerick from your six trains, four junctions, and two thorough applications of the Sweet Singer of the Great Southern—just a little weary.

5

Meanwhile Herself was being well cared for in the best hostelry in Limerick, which was no more than she deserved. But it was a little expensive. Four shillings a day for a donkey which cost forty, filled the eleventh day of one's stay with a vague sense that something was economically wrong. Nevertheless, I would no more have parted with her for economic reasons than I would have parted with an old and tried friend. We were now quite familiar with each other's faults and virtues. She made no comment on mine, but hers I made into a list:

1. She would invariably stop before every public house along the road.
2. Rain reduced her speed at least forty per cent.
3. She preferred raisin bread to plain bread.
4. If I were eating an apple, she demanded the core as her right.
5. A three minutes' roll on the road gave her a new lease of life.
6. She would drink only the purest water, from well or spring or mountain brook.
7. Oats, mixed with a little crushed corn and bran were best.

8. It usually took a full hour on the road in the morning, and sometimes a good thwack before she awakened to the serious nature of our undertaking. . . .

But on the morning we left Limerick, thanks to her superlative stabling she needed no attention at all. Indeed, it was hardly more than noon before we had reached the village of Castleconnell on the Shannon eight miles beyond.

I carried a letter to a family of the gentry who lived there, but the family was away at church, so I started on for Killaloe, twelve miles farther up the road. Then along came a young man on a bicycle out of the village, and he dismounted and walked along beside me. And when he found that I was a stranger, he said, "What! Are you going right through Castleconnel?"

"Yes. I want to make Killaloe tonight."

"But—have you anywhere to eat dinner, now?"

"I expect to have a bit of lunch along the road."

"Well now, come back with me, won't you? I'd like to take you to the Falls of the Shannon (they are only a mile the other side of the town) and then we can go back to my house to dinner."

So back we went, left Herself at the village, took a ferry across the broad, swiftly-flowing Shannon, and walked down the well-wooded bank beside elm and larch and oak, coming at last to the Falls of Dunass, which do not fall at all, in the Niagara sense of the word, but which are a rapid where the waters of the Shannon swirl with great force among half-submerged rocks.

There is a legend of the people, my companion said, which tells that when Peter and Thomas and the other Disciples passed along the river on their wanderings, a donkey fell into the rapids on the Clare side and was whirled struggling

away. "Sure, I'm afraid, he's a *dun ass!*" said one of the Disciples, thus giving the falls their name.

Looking at the vast volume of spinning, whirling water which pours downstream at this point, one remembers that the Shannon is the greatest river in the two islands, and that this is the spot which has been focused upon for a water power project to furnish electricity for the awakening industries of southern Ireland.

Beside the rapids is a tiny hotel called Fisherman's Rest, with the Irish words *céad míle fáilte*, which mean *a hundred thousand welcomes* on its doorstep. Many a famous fisherman has fished below these rapids, for here may be found the magnificent thirty, forty, *fifty* pound Shannon salmon, perhaps the gamest fish of the whole salmon tribe, who will fight for an hour against the brain and will and muscle of a man, and sometimes escape—an accident which in all countries increases the size of a fish to vast proportions, as friends of fishermen well know.

Having seen these things, we returned to my companion's house where such a dinner was had that it made one think of the Irish bard who related how he "rowed through seas of broth, over swelling, boisterous waves of buttermilk, by perpetual pools of gravy." Being good men and true, we ate on without fear of complications. Indeed, the only complication which I can imagine arising out of the affair, was one which might have arisen if I had offered to pay for my dinner. That, as every Irishman knows, would have been an insult and *might* have led to a fight. However I had learned that first kindly lesson of the wanderer in Ireland two hundred miles or more down the road. So, after removing Herself from the box of oats which she had discovered at the back of the cart, I gave thanks, and thanks

again, and we went on, with gently-rounded contours, toward the north.

6

"Killaloe," to quote a usually unemotional guidebook,¹ "is a difficult place to describe." It is separated from the Shannon by a road and a canal with canal boats, both of which lie parallel to the river. A railroad runs along the opposite bank with a ribbon of woods beyond. When one looks out of the window of the Shannon View Hotel directly across the long bridge, one sees a strip of sky for the birds, a breadth of woods for the animals, a flashing line of railroad for those who hurry, a width of river for the salmon, a quiet band of canal for the slow cargo boats, and a white streak of road for those who go afoot.

The principal street of the town with its small, color-washed houses, runs steeply up a hill beyond the highroad like a street in Naples—a Naples, however, scrubbed within an inch of its life.

At the far end of the village I came upon a little old cottage with so much of the whitewash and plaster gone from its stone walls that the brown, time-darkened field-stones and mortar showed through in a pattern more naïve and beautiful than could come out of any architect's draughting-room in the world. There was a crumbling stone shed beside it—leaning against it, in fact—and both house and shed had roofs of rough slate with cushions of yellow moss growing between the slates. A cottage this, about which could be woven a thousand dreams and a thousand gentle fantasies; a cottage like that in the Land of Memory where the

¹ Adam and Charles Black, London. A good guidebook of Ireland.

grandparents of Mytyl and Tytyl in Maeterlinck's *Bluebird* lived.

As I stood before it in deep and sincere admiration, an old woman in a cap came to the door. It was clear by the expression of her face that she misunderstood my attention.

"Why should he, who is young and rich and healthy and finely dressed be scorning and disrespecting that which is already old and withered and melting piece by piece into the ground?"

I could see these thoughts written so plainly on her face that there rose in me an instant desire to speak. I was *not* very young nor rich nor well, and as for my clothes, there were spots where they were very thin; and I had not been distaining her little house at all, but had been wishing with all my heart that I could take it up bodily and set it down again in a place called Union Square in a long ugly city among a young, ruthless, hard-eyed people to show them how a house might grow old beautifully.

But before I could find words to say these things, she had shut the door. And I went on a little sadly, knowing that I too, and all of us, have so often misunderstood our fellows and have drawn away into the darkness of ourselves, closing many doors behind.

GALWAY AND LADY GREGORY

CHAPTER XI

1

THE way led once more into the hills. As we jogged slowly up the rising road north of Killaloe where the Shannon widens into the mist-swept waters of Lough Derg, out of the hills came young Lochinvar in the guise of a black Spanish donkey—a dashing young fellow with long hair like Pan, who began to flirt desperately with Herself.

She did not care for him, however, and neither did I, so in the character of irate godfather I drove him a little way down the road where he stood staring at me for a few moments in wistful, moody silence. But he was the most persistent young ass in the world and literally followed us for miles, while I stalked along like a crabbed old duenna in back of the cart. And why shouldn't I? Had not O'Leary the tinker said that Herself was only three? She didn't care for him anyway. . . . But at that moment I saw something glistening in the road. She had dropped—shades of Hans Andersen and Madame Du Barry—her shoe!

I picked it up quickly lest Cinderella-wise, she have this prince of the road following us all over the best of the western world.

Along came a man with a herd of cows.

"How are you?" I asked.

"Fine my life!" said he.

"Are you going far down the road?"

"Sure it's the best part of two miles I'm going."

"Well, would you mind driving that donkey down the road with the other animals? He has taken a fancy to my friend here."

"Sure I don't mind at all," he said. "And why should I—for he's me own donkey. Get along wid you, Clematis."

So Clematis, like Charlie Chaplin surrounded by the police, marched homeward in a cluster of rotundly inconsiderate cows. But at the turn in the road, I saw his head, also like Charlie's, swing around in a dazed and astonished good-by.

2

The shoe was a matter for immediate attention. I had intended going over the hills to Graney near the Galway border; but the town of Feakle, lying half a mile off the straight road, was nearer.

While the blacksmith at Feakle was replacing the shoe, he noticed that the left wheel of the cart was ailing. He took off the wheel, removed the heavy metal core or "box" from its center, padded the inside of the hub with a gunny sack, pounded the core in again—and broke it.

There were no more "boxes" in the immediate vicinity. With that stroke of the sledge, I became automatically a guest at Feakle for the night.

"You'll have no trouble at all for a room," the blacksmith assured me, as he sent a lad off to forage for another wheel-box. "Just try that house over there."

The young woman who came to the door smiled most agreeably, but she averred that the house was full, and stuck to it. I might find a room across the street at Mrs. O'Flaherty's, she said. . . .

Thus began a strange game in which I was ricocheted

from one family to another all the way down the long village street, having no idea whether I was being popped from friend to friend or enemy to enemy. In either case, the result was the same.

All but one gave excuses, and good excuses, with a friendly smile. Mrs. Keane had a sick sister she was tending; Mrs. Carrigan had a friend and her baby visiting her; Miss Mulcahy had one room but it was rented to a doctor and he might return at any hour of the night. It was only Mrs. Jones who did not have the kindness of a courteous refusal about her, and when I smiled pleasantly at her later on in passing by, she launched a look at me which would have shriveled the most case-hardened tinker in Connemara or even in Mayo.

So I went gloomily into a tiny public house, took out my map, and sat down at a table between a saucer-eyed old man and an old man with a bent back and a pendulous nose which he rested on his crossed hands—which in turn were resting on the top of a blackthorn stick.

"Biddie Erly . . ." the saucer-eyed old man was saying. "Her name and fame went through all the land. She lived in a mud-wall cabin in the parish of Glenee and she could tell you the doings of the spirit world. She was genuine, oh I suppose the most genuine of her class that ever lived. When you'd go there after breakin' your leg, she'd tell you where you came from and how you did it."

"That's right, now," said the other. "There was a sea captain, and his arm swelled up from the hand to the shoulder. The local clergy were opposed to Biddie Erly because she was wrong with the church (but she was right just the same!). So the sea captain went out a round-about way and came to her, and she said, 'Go home, man, and go to bed earlier. And he got over it all right. . . .'"

"She could prophesee too," said the saucer-eyed old man. "She could prophesee into the future."

"Excuse me," objected the nose, "I don't believe in propheseein'. I only believe in *the lines*."

"Pardon me," said the saucer-eyed, "I believe in *propheseein'*."

Evidently this was an old argument, for they began excusing each other and begging each other's pardon until I thought there would be a fight, to avoid which, I asked:

"What do you mean, may I ask, by 'the lines'?"

"I mean, *what is written*. Sure, anybody can prophesee, now! I can look out the window and prophesee we'll have rain. But what is in the lines is true. You have a map there (beggin' your pardon) with the roads and all marked on it. It is true. It is in the lines. . . . Excuse me. We are ignorant men."

"As for me," said the other, "*I believe in propheseein'*."

"If that is the case," I said smiling, "I wish you would tell me where I am going to stay tonight."

They bestirred themselves at that and called a few more men about the table.

"Have you tried O'Flaherty's and Burke's and Sullivan's and Cassidy's. Think of that, now! *What* a village without a bed for a stranger!"

At last a large, kindly fellow said that if nothing else turned up, he had a house that he was building. The loft was finished and there was hay in it I could use for bedding; and of course the donkey would be welcome in his shed.

So, between a layer of hay and a layer of potato bags, and barricaded against the breezes of the loft by rows of gasoline cans, I spent the night quite comfortably. But there must have been some complexes or suppressions at work, for several times during the night, I found myself

announcing aloud that Mrs. Jones could take her house, and her bed, and her warm blankets, and her black looks, and go right to the devil.

Not that I really wished her any bad luck . . .

3

The cart which had been repaired late in the evening was waiting for me, but the blacksmith was nowhere to be seen. His shop was closed. His house was closed too, and the window curtains drawn. If I had been the man that Mrs. Jones thought me, it would have been easy enough to slip away through the early morning without settling the considerable bill which I would no doubt have to pay. While waiting for the blacksmith to appear, I recalled what he had done in the way of repairs.

The donkey's shoe had been heated, reshaped, and replaced. The cast metal wheel-box had been removed at considerable labor, padded, and refitted—during which process it had broken, this, however, at no fault of the blacksmith's. Another wheel-box had been furnished and refitted to the wheel, after which proceeding, both axles had been greased and the wheels replaced. The bill, I feared,—particularly for the second wheel-box—might run into a matter of pounds.

A head appeared at the blacksmith's window.

"Good morning. How much do I owe you for repairs?" I asked.

"Let me see, now. . . . Altogether, that will be . . ."

On my word of honor, he mentioned a sum of money, which, in American, comes to something less than thirty-three cents!

It was on the afternoon of this day that we crossed the high frontiers of the County Clare into Galway of the West—the playground and workground of John Millington Synge of *The Well of the Saints* and the Playboy and *Riders to the Sea*; of Lady Augusta Gregory of *Grania* and the Irish Folk History Plays, and *The Workhouse Ward* and *The Rising of the Moon*; of William Butler Yeats of *The Wild Swans at Coole*; of Callinan, and of the wandering Raftery; and more recently, of Liam O'Flaherty. Here too, had come George Moore, and Chesterton, and "A. E."

And of painters, such men as Walter Osborne of the early nineties, who was the first painter to be chased out of the fishermen's quarter or Claddagh in Galway by women in red petticoats; and Augustus John, who was the second; and Sir William Orpen, whose study of an Irish buckeen hangs in the Metropolitan Museum in New York City; and Jack Yeats, the brother of the poet; and Paul Henry with a painting in the Luxembourg; and Lamb and Wilcox and Keatinge.

Then as I went on, with my thoughts upon Synge and Yeats and the rest of that goodly company, Herself, who was ambling along beside me suddenly gave a snort of astonishment and stopped in her tracks. We had passed many a locomotive and motor car and rock breaker and fiery steam roller, but this was the first time on the journey that Herself had shown the slightest sign of surprise. I followed her gaze with considerable interest to the side of the road. There stood—a cow with her leg in a splint. And there stood Herself, staring out from between her blinkers like an ancient village gossip peering through her spectacles.

"Ocht, the poor thing!" I could almost hear her say, "she'll *niver* look the same after that! Be me faith, won't all the neighbors be listenin' now, whin I tell thim about it!"

"Oh, get up!" I said. Whereupon she turned on me an outraged eye, squealed a small squeal, lifted her hind legs three inches off the ground, and stalked off up the road.

"If that is the way you are at the age of three," I thought, "Heaven help the one you are traveling with when you come into your full wickedness!"

Then as we went up into the fresh wind of the highlands beyond Kilclaran, along came a little boy with his hair in a black bang over his eyes and a bag of books over his shoulder. We talked together about such important matters as school and hurling, and he gave me a page out of his copybook to read which told about taking care of burns. "Apply strips of lent soked in anny kind of oil (carron oil is bes) to the burned surface." I asked him if he could use a penny, that is, if he were very sure he could use a penny, because I wouldn't like to give one to him unless he felt sure he could use it.

"Aye," he said, "aye," and walked away gazing into his hand with a look as though he had met King Midas himself coming down the road.

Now the country which had been a waste of small gray bowlders, ran down hill and turned into woodland. And from a wooded park beside the road, one could hear the sound of axes against trees, which in our age is usually a sad sound; and on the road were dozens of donkey carts and horse carts and a stream of little boys carrying off green, trailing branches considerably larger than themselves. And here, a short way beyond the wooded park, was the village of Gort.

A valuable and entertaining book might be written about

the personality of Irish villages—a volume, which as far as I know, has not yet been written. Why, for example, is one village physically neat and mentally active while another in similar surroundings is untidy and stupid? Why are villages sullen or merry or brutal or benevolent? What is it that makes this village tolerant of a man's donkey cart because of his face, while that village is intolerant of his face because of his donkey cart?

Gort is a friendly village. Immediately I came down its main street, I was aware of a kindliness, which, in spite of certain kindly souls in Feakle, had not been in the air. Here was a pleasant hotel with a paddock where a donkey might roll on her back. Here was a proprietor so affable that he led her to the paddock himself. And here was his daughter, Mollie Glynn, not long home from school; and an introduction, then her small, powerful motor car, and my host inquiring if I would like to go for a ride.

When we were perhaps a mile out of the village, Mollie Glynn asked, "Would you like to see Lady Gregory's house at Coole Park? It is only a mile or two away. Perhaps she is home herself. We shall see."

5

She came across the great study to meet us—small, white-haired, vivacious—with simple, charming dignity. She wore a black dress and there was a veil about her hair. Mollie Glynn presented me.

"It was good of you to come, Moira. How is your mother? . . . I'm glad of that. . . . And you are writing a book about Ireland, Mr. Speakman? That is a very large subject. What line are you following in it?"

I told Lady Gregory where my interest lay.

"And is Ireland as you expected it to be?"

"It is more than I expected it to be. I half expected to find that the qualities which we have been taught to look upon from childhood as Irish, were gone."

"Ireland has had her troubles," she said. And though she did not speak sadly nor wish us to know of what she was thinking, I knew that she was remembering, as every mother must, beyond other memories, the death of her son, who had died in the Great War.

Then Mollie Glynn, also seeing that there were other things to be talked about, spoke of the people who that afternoon had been taking away wood which the woodcutters had cut on Lord M's demesne. The taking had been entirely unauthorized. The Civic Guard had arrested twenty of them and there would be fines to pay.

"How sad it is too," Lady Gregory said, "to see all the wood disappearing. When I came through town on Friday I saw a number of carts filled with logs. Formerly it was peat they used. Even the trees here at Coole Park are being cut, but that is on property which has been sold, so one can't complain."

I remarked upon the splendid trees which surrounded the house.

"Yes, Coole has been well spoken of at different times. Yeats, you know, has written many of his poems here. He called one of his books *The Wild Swans at Coole*. 'A. E.' and Synge liked it here too, and George Moore."

It surprised me that she should speak so pleasantly of George Moore, who had made criticisms of her work which from across the Atlantic, had seemed to be the not altogether fair-minded criticism of one who in this particular

case, would put beauty of expression through a stiff course of literary philology.¹

"Oh, I forgive him lots," she said lightly, "for the nice things he said about Coole."

"And was it here at Coole that you met Synge?"

"No, I met him many years ago on the Aran Islands. I saw a man in civilian clothes out there with a guide, wandering about. I was a little annoyed at that, for I thought I had found the islands from a literary point of view myself, and he looked as though he were thinking about the sort of thing that I was thinking about. . . . Here is one of his books."

From a wide, double-partitioned bookcase, she took down a first edition of *The Playboy of the Western World* with its inscription in the crabbed hand of the great dramatist. "And here is a book by one of your own countrymen," she said, reaching for another volume.

"To Lady Gregory," I read, "whose inspirational work has helped raise the ideals of her country . . ." or at least, it was something like that, for my eye had jumped to the signature: "from her friend, Theodore Roosevelt."

Now that we had risen we might look around the spacious study with its great Empire desk, its many memoirs of literary friendships, its portraits and sketches by Sargent and Jack Yeats and by Lady Gregory's son, who had been a painter.

Here on the opposite wall was a portrait of her grandson by Augustus John. "Is it a good likeness?"

"Well, his eyebrows aren't pulled up that way, and his

¹ Mr. Moore's chief criticism of Lady Gregory's work seems to rest in the point that in his opinion, the dialect of many of her plays is not the spoken dialect, ancient or modern. One prefers Mr. Gilbert Seldes, who says that it is perfectly possible to write dialect without imitation of sound, and to do it effectively and honestly.

ears don't stick out—but it has his character. When I sit at my desk I can almost imagine that he is in the room. I wish he were. He'd love to see your donkey. Have you had the same animal all the way from Cork?"

"I have; and I'm hoping to have her for the whole trip, although there were some in Cork who said it was not possible."

"And what do you call her?"

"I call her 'Herself'—but that isn't very satisfactory. Would you suggest a name?"

Lady Gregory smiled. "What is she like?"

"Well, she's an ordinary, gray Irish donkey, very wise, but not as young, I think, as the tinker I bought her from told me. She has considerable character of her own, and a bit of pepper in her disposition, but she has never lain down in harness or refused on any occasion to go ahead."

"What would you think of *Grania*? Would that be too romantic? Grania 'walked all Ireland' with Diarmuid in the old Irish legend; and your Grania's name may live in story as the other's has."

Thus my companion of the road—probably at that moment enjoying her customary baptism of mud in the paddock—received the benediction of a mighty name.

But here was another room, a room lined from floor to ceiling with books—among them a magnificent ancient black-letter Froissart, a Clarendon's *History of Revolution* from 1702, and the prison Bible of an old Irish patriot whose name I have forgotten. As we looked at the classics which had belonged to her husband and at the art books which had belonged to her son, we talked about all manner of things from the objectivity of Greek art to the subjectivity of the Abbey Theatre in Dublin where most of her plays were first produced. And now, as we were about to take our

leave, she returned from the table where she had been writing for a moment, with one of her own books in her hand, saying, "I wouldn't like you to go away without having something to remember Coole by." And in the book was written:

To Harold Spearman -
 on his journey
 with kind regards from
 Alice
 Coole - Aug 8. '24

If I reproduce this inscription, please believe that it is not one of those ridiculous attempts to gain reflected merit through association, but only to complete the picture of a gracious Irish lady. And if other pages of this book bear the imprint and the impression of other people who may be celebrated for a few hundred years more or less, it is not because I have forgotten even for a minute the man who works with a spade along the side of the road.

It is he—not the rest of us—who will extend unchanging beyond all our little horizons to the far edge of such an eternity as the world shall have. And when that eternity

flickers out into the vastness of a richer, more widely-dimensioned space, it is he who will be there, leaning on his spade or its equivalent, and giving some queer comment of humor or philosophy or sorrow which will make that passing a finer and dearer and more human thing than it otherwise could possibly have been.

And there is no one who understands this better than Lady Augusta Gregory.

THE ARAN ISLANDS

CHAPTER XII

1

IN spite of a pair of Gaelic walking shoes which were beginning an active campaign of non-coöperation against a pair of Anglo-Saxon feet, I took the road to Galway town with a light heart. To the right rose the tops of seven rounded, blue hills—the Seven Hills of Coole, perhaps, to go with Mr. Yeats' Seven Woods at Coole. At times there seemed to be six crests, at other times eight—but no one except a topographer or the chief of the ordnance department would object to the more mystic average of seven.

Nearer at hand, over a rolling stony landscape, many herds of small, wide-horned cattle were grazing, separated herd from herd by fences of laid stone which cut the country into unnecessarily small fields. (The traveler with a flair for agricultural economics can view these little fields with a certain complacency, however, for if the stones were not in the fences, they would certainly be in the fields!)

Then came the hamlet of Oranmore at the end of a blue shining tentacle of Galway Bay, and beyond it the skeleton of a burned police barrack uprising against the sky. As I looked at it, there returned the memory of fifty such police barracks which I had already seen in the south of Ireland, and particularly, that of a vast silent ruin on the hill above Tipperary.

The Tipperary barrack had been one of the finest in the

world—an immense parade ground surrounded by a quadrangle of splendid buildings of dressed stone. But when I had seen it, it was a ruin—gutted, hollow, empty—silent as the ruins of Baalbec, its chimney-pots pointing futilely to the unconcerned sky, a ruin of a few seasons which by its appearance might have been a ruin of a thousand years. As I looked at its desolation, the question came to me with vivid intensity: Had something happened to the British Empire?

This particular destruction, it is true, was caused by Irish Republicans fighting the Irish Free State. But were not these barracks built for the soldiers of England? Was it possible that England had not immediately replied with prison and sword as she had done during hundreds of years before?

England *could* have come back. Let no one in Ireland or out of Ireland have the faintest doubt of that. A few well-placed battleships, a few well-aimed shells, a few well-directed bombing planes . . . But fortunately for Ireland, at that particular moment in history, the world was looking askance at the ethics of a far-flung battle line, and how to fling it.

I was to think of these things again when I crossed the border into Ulster.

2

Galway, the Citie of the Tribes—so named for its thirteen principal families of the 13th Century—has about it a decided feeling of antiquity. But the first object I noted was *not* an antique. It was a sign over a shop, bearing the good news, "P. Rabbit, Grocer." Peter Rabbit, no doubt, specializing in green groceries, especially cabbage! Gal-

way displays the remains of a past prosperity more freely than any other city in Ireland—a prosperity which dates from 1270 when its walls were built to protect from brigands the cargos brought in by the galleons of Spain. There are many vast empty warehouses of stone about the city, and a number of huge unused mills with the water from their spillways rushing energetically under the many small bridges at the lower end of the town.

There are mediæval houses which reflect the architectural taste of a country considerably nearer the equator. And there is a wall bearing in bas-relief a skull and cross-bones, below which is an inscription stating that this is the ancient memorial of “the stern and unbending justice of James Lynch Fitzstephen elected mayor of the city A.D. 1493, who condemned and executed his own guilty son Walter on this spot.” The young man had killed a rival, and the father, fearing that he might fail in his civic duty, hanged the lad out of the window with his own hands! In several places about the city, recent houses are to be seen with ancient coats of arms set into their walls—like children wearing the cameos of their great-grandmothers.

After browsing among these old-time remains, I wandered down to the Marino and stood on a jetty watching the black-sailed fishing boats string out like sable geese one by one into the sunset. There was another man watching on the jetty, and presently we began to talk together.

“You hear about the poetry of a fisherman’s calling and their romantic life and all that; well—five of those men go out together in a boat and work all night. The best catch they made any night last week netted them fifteen shillings per boat to be divided among the five. They live there on the strand in that village of thatched huts called the Clad-

dagh. . . . A man doesn't require too much wealth of course, but . . ."

I agreed with him that three shillings was not enough for a night's work. There was a certain economic point below which happiness was excluded from a man's life. On the other hand (we agreed opulently), wealth above a certain point had no true relation to happiness either. We also agreed that the return of the arts toward a certain ruggedness and simplicity was perhaps a hopeful swing of the pendulum.

Now all this agreeing was rather pleasant. For there are many cities, where, if you met a strange man on a pier and said that the return of the arts toward a certain ruggedness and simplicity was a hopeful swing of the pendulum, he would probably take a hopeful swing at you with his fist, fully intending to knock you off into the water.

But now my new acquaintance was pointing out that the fishing boats were well on their way, adding that the Aran Islands were out there twenty-eight miles from Galway, and that I should not miss seeing them, for the islanders were not like the people of the mainland. They were very good people on the islands, he said—so good, in fact, that Augustus John, the painter, had painted there in a very exemplary manner, but at last, not being able to stand their goodness any longer, he had come back to the Claddagh and got gloriously—well——

So we talked on and on about many places and how to get to them, and about people one met on the road, particularly about the tinkers, who were traveling vagabonds and dealers in donkeys. They did odd jobs around the farmhouses and made tin vessels out of solder and flat pieces of tin. They were a traveling people and often took their

women along with them in large covered wagons called caravans; but they were not gypsies, for the gypsies were black foreigners, quite distinct and separate.¹

"Where do the tinkers come from?" I asked.

"From other tinkers," he said pensively, and went on to describe a beautiful fight which had taken place between two tinkers on a newly-tarred street. . . .

We turned back toward the city, for the boats were gone out of sight and the night was coming on. We stopped to say good-by.

"Another place you don't want to miss is Connemara—the hill country back of Galway. You ought to spend a month there. Connemara has some of the finest scenery in Ireland."

I told him that I should certainly spend some time in Connemara but that I was traveling Ireland afoot and had to watch myself quite carefully, for if I spent as much time in each place as I wished, before I finished my journey I would be an old man treading on the end of my beard.

Whereupon he turned around and said, "I have an old motor car that I'm not using just now. I'd be glad to let you take it for a month if you like."

I thanked him but refused, saying that I wanted to keep off the beaten track as much as I could—to which explanation he assented with full understanding. Then we said good-by, and I have never seen him again from that day to this. But I have thought of him a number of times, for while I have stood on many piers in many lands, I was never offered the use of an automobile for a month by a stranger

¹ In the notes of a recent play by Lady Gregory, she speaks of having heard from the lips of a countryman the reason for the tinker's restlessness. When the Lord was on the cross, no tradesman could be found to drive the nails into his hands and feet, but at last a tinker did it, "and that is why they have come to walk the world."

who did not know my name, until I stood on a pier in Galway.

3

The good ship *Aengus* at one thousand tons, is the only boat which plies regularly between Galway and the Aran Islands. Sometimes in winter, the storms force the little steamer back, and then the people of Galway town get quite worried, thinking that the islanders may be running out of supplies.

There is only one port in the islands, and that is the village of Kilronan on Inishmore, the largest and farthest of the group. At the other two islands, Inishmaan and Inishkeer, the *Aengus* stops a few rods off shore and the Aran men row out in their wooden-framed, canvas-covered curraghs which are coated with tar to withstand the waves.

As the *Aengus* approaches the islands, the stranger coming for the first time to the Arans receives an impression of desolate, windswept hills covered with a waste of tortured gray stones. Later, as one walks along the rugged trails, it is that impression which deepens and strengthens and burns into one's brain, until at last the thought of the Arans becomes the thought of gray rock, with men contesting bitterly against the rock and the wind and the sea.

About one, over the forbidding gray plateaus of Inishmore, spreads a network of beautiful, fragile-looking stone fences—fences skillfully yet delicately erected of single layers of stones, fences which are laid together so loosely that they look more like delicate openwork lace against the sky than barriers to withstand the wind and the rain.

Many of the fields between have been made by the most arduous labor. First a pocket of rock is chosen which is

somewhat protected from the wind. The loose, brittle stones are removed from its surface and built into fences. There are frequently crevices in the bed rock under foot; sometimes these are very deep. They must be filled with stones and carefully tamped down. Then sand is brought up bag by bag from the coast and spread upon the rock! The first year, nothing grows in the sand. Seaweed is placed on the arid surface. The second year, the sand takes on a certain resemblance to soil; still nothing grows but weeds. More seaweed is placed on it. But in the third year, if weather conditions are favorable, there may be a small crop.

Many of the islanders are fishermen as well as farmers. But bad times have fallen on their coasts in the form of English and French steam trawlers which are constantly fishing about the islands. While for the most part these keep outside the legal three-mile limit, they make competition by men in small sailing boats a futile and disheartening thing.¹

During the Great War, the islanders took in some £40,000 for fish, but at the present writing, many of the people are in debt to the shopkeepers, who, however, have stood by them to a man. There is no crime on the islands. There may occasionally be a dispute about a fence—a matter of a foot or two this way or that—but it is usually due to a misunderstanding. No man is deliberately trying to cheat another.

One is particularly impressed by the cleanliness of the houses. They are spick and span. The bed linen may be old and worn, but it is clean—a condition which cannot always be truthfully reported of the mainland. The Aran

¹ While I was at Kilronan, seventeen French steam trawlers came into the harbor in one night for safety.

Islanders live frugal, temperate lives. Most of them wear home-spun clothes and home-made moccasins of hide, called pampooties. A sturdy, upright people, these, with a great love for their rugged promontories. Nor is this a new devotion, for some old exile of the 6th Century—St. Columcille I think—sang this song from afar:

Aran, my light,
O Aran, my light,
My love is lying in her
In the West.
To be within sound of her bell,
It is the same thing
As to be
In happiness.

The islands indeed, bear mute witness to the affection of those who have lived and meditated among these somber headlands, for spread over their fourteen miles of length by two or three miles of breadth, they carry more ancient architecture than may be found on any similar area in Ireland. Here in the old days were holy men galore—St. Enda, St. Breacan, St. Kenerg, St. Benan, St. Kiernan—and here may still be seen the fragments of their chapels and churches and oratories. Little wonder then, that the Arans have been called the Islands of the Blest.

4

People you meet on the road there speak to you in Gaelic, and nearly always with a smile. "God bless you," they say or, "God bless your walk." If you speak the Irish yourself, you reply, "God and Mary to you!" If however you greet them in English, their answer comes immediately

in English—provided they have any. Some of them don't. On my way to see a prehistoric fort called Dun Aengus at the west side of Inishmore, I met two lads of twenty-three or four who spoke no English at all.

A little farther down the road, a very old man with a red, white, and gray beard also addressed me in the native tongue.

"I'm sorry, I don't speak Gaelic," I said.

"Do you mean to say," he admonished in English, "that you would come back here to the mother country without——"

"But my people aren't Irish!"

"Ah, in that case, you're excusable! By your shoes, I'd take you for an American. I was in America once. That's a fine country, now—although I broke me leg in it. To tell the truth, I haven't been content since I left, and that was when I was a very young man. It was working I was, for the P. and O. at St. Anne's in Canada when I was after breaking me leg. I went to the hospital so, and used up all my savings. (It was a young man I was.) Then I came back here and broke me other leg." At the sad, reawakened memory of those two accidents, he turned away a moist and rheumy eye; and although I felt a certain sympathy for his sadness, I wondered how many thousand times, down the fifty years which must have intervened, his accidents had been blamed for the misfortunes of the entire world.

"Is this the road to the old fort called Dun Aengus?"

"It is indeed, but you can't be getting there and back again to Kilronan. It's too late."

"I'll chance it."

"Well, since you're an American citizen, I'll point out the way as best I can. Follow the straight road to Johnson's

place, then turn to the left, then to the right—and I can do no more than that—for you'll be there."

5

The prehistoric fort, Dun Aengus, stands at the top of a rocky plateau three hundred sheer feet above the sea. The outer fortification consists of three square, rugged walls made of irregular, unmortared stone blocks. It is fifteen or twenty feet in height. The fourth wall—if there ever was a fourth wall—has dropped, together with the cliff that supported it, down into the abyss below. The inner fort, in the shape of a horseshoe, also has its open side to the stark edge of the cliff. On the plateau in front of the outer fortification is a savage entanglement of sharp, saber-like stones three or four feet high—a *cheval de frise* for breaking the enemy's line.

This crude defense, made without mortar and with no other material than the savage gray stones of the plateau, has crouched above the precipice for two thousand years.

As I stood in the midst of those sullen walls, it came over me with a sense of horror that this was no ordinary fortress such as one might see at any frontier. *This was the last, terrible defense of an already defeated people.*

In Europe, the terrific, relentless pressure of races has always been to the west. Ireland is the western frontier of Europe. The Arans are the land's last defense from the sea. Here, at the west side of the most westerly island, on this grim, parched, waterless plateau, here with their backs to the top of a three hundred foot precipice, the men of a lost race, perhaps pathetically unaware of their extremity, had built themselves this thing of horror.

Who built it? No one can say definitely. Probably the

builders were the Firbolgs, distantly related to the Belgae; and it seems likely that the opposing tribes were Celts. People did not think much of the Firbolgs for some time after their tribal disintegration. There is an old book dated 1650 which says that every one who is "black, loquacious, lying, tale-telling, or of a low and groveling mind" is of the Firbolg descent.

There are other ancient defenses about the island. On the west coast two miles south of Kilronan, the Black Fort, probably built three thousand years ago by an earlier branch of the Firbolgs, is less regular in construction than Dun Aengus but not less permanent. The roughly rectangular pieces of limestone in its walls, each of which could be moved by a child, and which are laid together without mortar into crude but flat-surfaced walls, remain piled upon each other with a nicety which must be highly discouraging to thirty centuries of Irish weather. The skill in that work is in the nature of a forgotten art. Buttresses erected in 1898 to assure the safety of the walls are already falling down, while the old masonry remains!

Within the Black Fort is a lovely and delicate turf—not grass but some plant which grows out in tiny star-like clusters resembling moss in its fineness. If you pull up a piece with your hands, you can see how peat might have been formed from similar plants in the bogs of the mainland. The moist, black, powdery soil in which it grows is almost lost among the mass of its fibrous roots. I imagine that one could sleep on it as upon a soft and accommodating mattress.

There is nothing soft, however, at Dun Aengus.

As I came down the darkening road from that gloomy fortification, the ancient man with the red, white, and gray beard was still sitting upon a large stone by the roadside.

"And how did you like itself?" he asked.

"It is remarkable—but grim."

"Aye, grim it is indeed! A pity we have had no good sunset this long while. I have stood of an evening to the west by Dun Aengus at the setting of the sun, and it seemed, in the glory of it, that there was another island far out in the sea beyond. . . . There is a story of a man who was a dreamer sat on a high cliff. And day after day he was seeing the other island until at last he took a curragh and traveled out beyond. And each morning it faded before him, but in the evening it was there again. And he is still traveling on toward the west."

"*That* would be something to paint—the man on the gray cliff and the other land out there," I exclaimed.

"Aye . . . aye. . . . There have been painters come to Aran too in the old days," he said.

I thought of what the man I had met on the dock in Galway had related. "Do you remember an English painter named Augustus John?"

"Aye. It was more than ten years ago. He made a picture of a strong little man in Kilronan called Billy O'Brien. But after the picture was finished, Billy O'Brien began to waste away-like. . . . There's many a one as had his picture painted has wasted away." His well-rounded chest rose and sank again to the accompaniment of a profound, mellifluous sigh.

6

My sojourn on Inishmore was slightly clouded by one of the few unpleasant experiences which happened to me in Ireland. If for no other reason than that it may be worth relating.

Surrounded by a group of quiet, courteous Inishmore men, I was standing beside the road making the sketch of the little house which appears opposite. I had chosen that particular house because it seemed in its simplicity to reflect the clean, honest spirit of the islands. It was also representative of most of the other houses which are to be seen in the villages of the Arans.

I was starting to lay on the color when a short, officious woman—black-haired, black-eyebrowed, with a grim expression and snub nose like the Duchess of *Alice in Wonderland*—came bustling up and announced to whom it might concern, "There's somebody painting. I must see what he is doing." She brushed the others out of the way, looked at the sketch a moment, and then, without the slightest understanding of why I was drawing it, exclaimed, "Oh, you oughtn't to make a little house like that! You ought to take one of the big houses in Kilronan. People will judge the islands by your painting and think that they are poor!"

A minute later she bustled away again, but the Aran men who had listened to her words now turned upon me eyes of some perplexity and doubt which before had shown only friendliness. A little later in the day, as I went up the road to make another sketch, I came around a corner just in time to hear the same woman saying to another knot of people, "Isn't it a shame . . . wrong impression . . ." She saw me and lowered her voice.

Returning down the hill, I met her again. (I couldn't seem to miss her!) Her small son, a nice enough little boy of seven, was with her. She stopped me and announced, "He's a Yankee too, born in America." She had lived a long time in the United States, she said, and had only been back in Ireland four years.

"How do you like Ireland?" I asked.

"*I hate Ireland,*" she said; and because the blood was rising in my face at the thought of this woman who hated Ireland telling me or any man what or what not to paint there, I left her as soon as I decently could. But that was not the end of it, for day after day she went on telling her story about the little house to every one she could find—even to the proprietress of my hotel! The Aran Islanders are naturally a shy, reserved people, and as my grim censor went on talking, their shyness and reserve increased.

On the very day on which I was to leave Kiltonan, a young state's attorney from Kildare who had spent his holiday on Inishmore told me with a smile that he had heard the story in a *Gaelic-speaking* village at the far end of the island *seven miles away!*

I left the Arans with a sense of bewilderment and incompleteness. I felt like a man I had known in a mathematics class, who after a problem had been discussed, would raise his voice and cry, "What's it all about!" I felt like a man who was trying to fight a fog with a baseball bat.

It is probably clear to those who read this book that I like human beings. They are interesting and likable beyond comparison. But heaven defend us all—writers, Hottentots, spinsters, poets, criminals, dyspeptics, college boys, junk men and dog-eating Igorrotes—from the wagging tongue of a stupid woman!

THE WILD WEST

CHAPTER XIII

1

NORTHWEST from Galway town lies Connemara. It is a land of red skirts and a thousand wrinkled faces. It is a land where girls don't forget to smile at you any more than they do in Kerry, and where horses, carrying huge loads of whatever they have to carry on their two-wheeled carts, work for their masters up and down the hills with great good will. It is a land where those hills are such an intense cobalt blue, and the sky is such an intense cerulean blue, and the clouds are so white and the wind-pressed foliage of oak and elm and juniper is so black against the hillsides that the whole thing becomes a sort of pain.

In the midst is the village of Oughterard with a bridge and a swift clear stream and the windows of its agreeable hotel looking out toward Lough Corrib. Here I met an English lad of Birmingham who was cycling south from Belfast and Ulster—a friendly fellow in a shabby sweater who, I found, preferred Wagner to Puccini.

"My pal at home likes Verdi better than either," he said. "I don't know why. He knows as much about music as I do. Of course, *I* don't know very much . . ." He was a nice lad with a sort of wistfulness and kindness about him—a young adolescent citizen of a type so prevalent all over the western world that it brings home to the traveler certain somewhat socialistic conclusions regarding most of the causes of trouble between the governments.

He was so obviously English that I asked him how he had got on with the Irish people since he had been south of Ulster.

"Oh beautifully," he said, smiling. "Everything has been lovely. When I go through the country and meet the people, *I don't know who it was made all the trouble.*"

As I went away, I thought, "You don't know who made all the trouble because when you were a little lad in school in England, you studied a small red book which was called a history, and which told everything that had happened to England from an English point of view. And in Ireland, Irish lads were studying small green books called histories, but written in such a way that you would hardly have recognized the events which were related in both as the same events.

In Greece and Italy and France and Germany there were other little books called histories with small boys attached to them by pairs of small, grimy fists. You would have been surprised and shocked to find what some of those little boys thought of some of your greatest events and greatest people.

And now that you are grown up, most of the newspapers which you read carry on the traditions of your small red books. But the Irish newspapers, which you do not read, carry on the traditions of the small green books; so that on one side of the Irish Channel, the mighty, nebulous figure called truth takes on a very different aspect from that which is seen on the other side of the channel.

America? Oh yes, it is like that in America too. There have been history books enough from the American point of view, and millions of freckle-faced little lads standing up and misquoting from the preamble of our Constitution, "All men are born free 'n equal," when every one of their fathers

who does any thinking for himself knows that that phrase is biologically, ethically, and economically false.

2

After Oughterard came a vast flat moorland with rugged mountains springing quite sharply from it, and no houses for miles, and such a day that the sun, fighting its eternal battle against the clouds and wind, forced indigo and mauve shadows across the rounded breasts of the hills.

Here was a great and silent beauty, quickened to life by the march and countermarch of clouds patrolling massively at their various levels. But in spite of these battalions majestically wheeling and deploying overhead—in spite of a thousand water-filled kettle holes of the glacial time which brought down to the moorland momentary reflections of sky and cloud—it was very plain that if rain conquered the sun and swept across the nakedness of the hills, this would become a scene of immense desolation.

Here among the craters were a few long-maned Connemara ponies and many more Connemara donkeys. Grania, traveling with the greatest unconcern through a day full of magnificent scenery and the bitter, despairing cries of shaggy Lotharios of the road, sauntered slowly on until we came to a railroad crossing at the far side of the moor. The gates were closed. Evidently a train was approaching. I sat down on a bench and chatted with the fair gatekeeper. Five, six, seven minutes passed. No train. Eight, nine, ten minutes. Strange that she should shut the gates so far in advance!

"Is the train late?" I inquired after fifteen minutes had passed.

"Train?"

"Yes, the train you shut the gates for."

"Sure there's no train coming at all! We keep the gates closed for safety. If you're wanting to go through, I'll open them," she added, smiling gayly. So I went on, thinking that here was safety first but unless one kept one's eye on the road, not so much safety last.

Then rather suddenly it was six o'clock, and we were still short of Leenane where we were going, by nine Irish miles¹—which is more English miles than it was pleasant to contemplate at that hour of the afternoon.

As Grania continued along the road at her disheartening worm's pace, my mind went back to a slouching old man with light blue eyes and a slobbery lower lip who had taken care of her at the hotel in Galway while I was at the Aran Islands. I felt sure that he had handled her badly, for when I returned, she was very nervous, jumping and lashing out at the slightest provocation. I had looked her over with great care to see whether there were marks of blows on her, but whatever he had done had been done cleverly. There was no sign.

So now I went on wondering whether he had fed her arsenic, or had beaten her over the head, or had stuck a knife inside her hoofs in some fiendish way (for she seemed a little lame), until at last, I imagined that I had him by the throat and was giving him a thrashing; and the vividness of the scene was so intense that I raised my stick and gave a good thwack to the very female to whose aid I was flying!

She looked around with a snort of outraged protest.

In a spirit of penitence, I helped her with the cart up the next hill.

¹ 11 Irish miles = 14 English miles.

3

An old shepherd came down the mountainside. There was a sort of inn, he said, beyond the bridge yonder, at Ma'am's Cross. So we trickled down into a pleasant valley entirely inclosed by mountains like the valley in *A Dreamer's Tales* or that in *The King of the Golden River*, with a stream running down the center between green pastures. On a terrace beyond a second bridge stood a stone house with a sign on it which read, *Ma'am Hotel*, and that was correct, for it was conducted by two maiden ladies whose names I never learned. If this book were fortunate enough to be written by Mr. James *Crock of Gold* Stephens, who deals in truths which are deeper than actualities, he would certainly report that the ladies' names were Yes Ma'am and No Ma'am. As it is, I can only say that after a consultation with each other, they took me in and gave me a bedroom and a bowl of milk with buttered toast, and that there was a little black dog named Jack who sat with his head against my knee while I ate.

"Is he a good watch dog?" I asked.

"He is," said the one who might be Yes Ma'am. "He'll sit there and watch you just as long as you eat!" And she laughed so merrily as she left the room that almost by reflex action, Jack netted two pieces of toast.

Next the hotel was a large shop which had been requisitioned by the Civic Guards for a barrack. As I stood talking with two of the Guards, the sergeant came up with a great bamboo fishing rod in one hand, and in the other the smallest fish that ever fitted mouth over hook.

This valley, the sergeant said, was called the Joyce Country. He and his four men had been there only three weeks.

Before that, during all of two years, the valley had had no police at all, for the people thereabouts were of the finest and never made any trouble for any one.

"But the other side of those mountains! Holy mother! You should have been here last week. There's a place on the coast called Carraroe, and they are all fisherfolk like, and there was a saint's day—St. Mac Dora's Day (which I never heard of before)—and they drank poteen whiskey and went roarin' mad, a hundred of them.¹

"And the Guards were drafted for miles about and charged them on a great moor. But they picked up rocks you never saw the like of, one rock in each hand, and hurled them at us, and then they would scamper away like rabbits up the hills; but when we drew back, they shouted to each other to come on again, each with his fist over a great rock as big as a bucket that should have been in the Tailteann Games.

"Then we charged them good with our batons, but they were away again like a streak between the bowlders and we after them with no chance of getting one of them at all, for they ran twice as fast as the Guards and three times as fast as mountain goats. I never saw such a rout since the War!"

I listened to this narration with huge delight. For as long as there is the making of an old-fashioned friendly fight in some far corner of Erin, with no gun-play nor new-fangled dynamite, but cobblestones flying like confetti, then, by the mad pudding of Ballyboulteen, Ireland is the old Ireland still.

When the sergeant had finished his tale, I went to see how Grania was faring and found that the stable man had brought her a load of fresh hay and a fragrant bed of ferns

¹ See *The Irish Times*, July 19, 1924.

and wild flowers to lie on. Then I went to my own bed which—being in the house of two lone spinster ladies who were not able to keep abreast of our advancing civilization—smelt not of cigarettes but of lavender. And if I am able to report to you that it rained furiously during the night, it is only because that is what I was told.

4

Along the road the next morning, I met one of the Joyces—that clan which since the edge of time has given its name to the Joyce Country. He was a tremendous upstanding man with wisdom back of his eyes, and a great stick in his hand, and hundreds of sheep which looked like white maggots on the green, moth-eaten vastness of the mountain-sides.¹

He showed me a mound which had been an old Norman fort, declaring that some people who had rooted around in it had found a Norman sword. "And they say," he concluded, "that there is a hollow chamber inside the mound—if any one would care to be rooting a little more."

It was on April 23rd, 1921, within sight of this mound, that Padraic O'Maille, later Deputy Speaker of the Dáil, engaged in a day-long fight about his own house with the Royal Irish Constabulary, finally escaping over the hills with twenty of his comrades from a force of two hundred soldiers and police without losing a man. Encounters like this have happened all over the south of Ireland. Such ancient heroes as Gull of the Flail, and Finn MacCool, and

¹The Joyces have the reputation of being the largest, strongest men in Ireland. Later, in a town called Westport, I heard from several sources of a man named Tobias Joyce whose cart had broken down at Glinsk Bridge six miles from Westport, and who had carried a two hundred pound sack of corn those six miles into town on his shoulders.

Diarmuid who went with Grania, and the sons of Galam who beat up the weak sisters of the Tuatha De Danaan somewhere in Kerry had best look to their laurels; for a new crop of legends is springing up which will surpass those of any other country for many a year. Lugaid, son of Ith may frequently have heard his name on the lips of his bards—but Mr. Daniel Breen and other recent champions put theirs on the title-page of books.

Come Grania! Just because I am ruminating, must you stop and ruminate too? Let us jog up the valley and down over the end of it to Killery Bay and the hotel at Leenane.

5

I suppose that a hotel keeper has a right to call the workers in his tweed factory peasants if he chooses. I suppose he has a right to put up a sign in his bedrooms which reads: "Visitors will really be interested in seeing the Tweeds made by the peasants." But when he puts up another sign beside it which announces: "Visitors holding Cook's Coupons should notify same at office," he not only puts a great hardship on such of his guests as carry Cook's Coupons, but arouses a vague suspicion as to just who is who in this peasant-calling business.

Let us preferably consider Killery Bay. It is a long, narrow, fjord-like arm of the sea between abrupt purple mountains, and here is a grandeur of arrangement which is superlative both in good weather and bad. Across from the hotel towers the height of Bengorm, a sheer twenty-three hundred feet above the sea. To the west, shutting off a view of the Atlantic, rise Benbury and Mweelrea, while to the east, beyond the head of the fjord, stands the Devil's Mother, four-square and beetling.

A road runs around the end of Killery Bay close to the shore. One may walk along it for several hours and again find oneself distantly abreast of the hotel with the sparkling blue water of the bay between. The depth of that same blue water is such that England's entire Atlantic fleet has on occasion come to anchor eight miles inland in the heart of these mountains.

But it is when one turns westward into the valley of the Bunderragha that the full beauty of the country grips one by the throat and claps one into chains. Dear angels of Botticelli—what things to paint! The great, glittering fjord with the Twelve Pins of Connemara rising behind it; a group of white houses flashing in the sun like the new Ireland; a cluster of ancient thatched cottages mellowing like the old; a gushing mountain torrent with heather and a bridge; a vast peat bog below cloudswept mountains; a dark, lovely forest grove beside a silver lake . . . sunlight and mist . . . crags, and a swirl of vapor against royal purple . . .

As I walked along beside this magnificent focusing of beauty, the painter in me—wiry and tough but a little restive from lack of exercise—rose up on his legs and cried, "Halt!"

I stopped Grania. "No farther," continued the painter. "This is the place to paint, writer, and I don't give a tinker's what-you-call-it whether it is on the schedule or not. We've gone past too many fine things already just for the expediency of this writing business!"

"But the next hotel is twelve miles away," said the writer.

"What do I care?" the painter shouted. "What has a hotel and comfort to do with painting anyway! We are going to stay here even if I have to sit on you."

"You aren't man enough!" cried the other. In a moment they were at it, I watching the brawl with some interest; and shortly, there was the painter sitting astride the writer as he had threatened. So I swung Grania meekly around and returned to the new, shining village, only to find that they could not put me up, for the houses were full. But there was a shepherd and his wife, they said, who lived a little way up the valley, and these would take me in surely.

She was a young woman, the shepherd's wife—very young for the mother of seven—with the face of a calm Irish madonna.

"Yes, I can take you in," she said.

"I should like to stay three days. Can you give me my meals?"

"Yes. But it will be simple food. Bread, butter, eggs, tea. Things like that."

"How much will you ask?"

"Would—would fifteen shillings be too much for three days?"

"No," I thought, "not too much." Not too much, considering that I had paid sixteen shillings for one day at the Leenane hotel a few miles away. . . .

6

And now, to paint! ("But you have no turpentine," said the writer. "Go to the deuce!" answered the painter, and got some gasoline from a passing motor truck.)

The country was like drenched blotting paper from the almost continuous rain. It was the worst summer that Ireland had known in years. If one picked out the highest hummock on the highest part of the bog and sat down on it, it went *squish*, and one rose again, cold and altered. Never-

theless, the painter found a hummock for his paint box, with a mountain and a peat bog before it, and, sitting down on another hummock with water well over his shoetops, he put up his canvas and began to squeeze out the paint. But just then a few large, cold drops came splashing onto the palette, and a moment later, down came the rain just as it had done on nearly every similar occasion.

Now in some respects, I am a patient man, and I can prove it—for I have traveled nearly a thousand miles on foot with a donkey; but the painter is no patient man at all. So he rose in his wrath, and standing halfway to his knees in bog-water, he damned the Irish weather all the way from Kinsale Head to Ballycastle and back again, inquiring in a loud voice why every Irishman did not go violently insane and slay his neighbor and his neighbor's wife and his man-servant and his maid-servant and his ox and his ass and his duck and his bee, and then climb on top of the heap and dive off onto his head. The weather, however, kept right on. So at last he plumped himself down in the water again and said, "Oh—to—*hellwithit!* I'm going to PAINT!"

"Painting won't do you much good if you drown us," said the writer disconsolately. But they managed to survive, and so did the sketch, (page 150) which shows the peat bogs and the cuttings, and the rows of sods piled up along the edges "to dry."

7

My bed-and-dining-room, besides being the general room for the household, was the habitat of two dogs, a short-tailed cat, and two white hens with rose-colored combs

—as trim, neat-appearing hens as you ever saw in any bedroom in your life. As I sat drying before the peat fire, my hostess came in and, after talking about food, said with distress in her eyes, "*I'm afraid I can't give you any potatoes. . . .*"

A household in Ireland without potatoes! My mind went back to the splendid dining room at Muckross House, with some one murmuring gently in my ear, "Sherry or brandy, sir? . . . Rhine wine or claret?"

So here was the shepherd with his wife and his seven children, presumably without extra funds, but with some rough, hilly land, a brook of pure water flowing past his house, a cow or two, chickens, and some sheep—the sort of establishment about which a passer-by might say, "How do these people live!"

They live by relentless, unceasing attention to the details of living. The necessities to be purchased with money are few. Flour, sugar, salt, shoes, tea. Cloth for clothes is bought by the piece from a weaver in a neighboring village—perhaps in exchange for fleeces or a sheep. The cows furnish milk for the young shepherds as well as butter and cheese for all. There are several mid-season potato-less months during the year, but these are managed on bread, milk, eggs, and tea. There is also a small cabbage patch, but meat is a rarity.

The sheep are sheared in a fold not far from the house; then their bodies are marked in black pitch with the mark of the shepherd. A good fleece may bring as much as eight shillings, which, of course, is not a great income per year per sheep; but if there are two hundred sheep the children will not actually go hungry.

The peat bogs a few yards away furnish fuel for cooking

and heating. When there is nothing more important to do, the family works endlessly in the bogs, cutting, piling, turning, and at last carrying the dry sods to the shelter of a shed near the house.

It was evident that all who were able to work did their work with a will. During a single day the woman, with the help of the eldest girl, found time to take care of the house and poultry, give the morning and midday meals to her husband and the children, cook and serve my meals separately, milk the cows, work half the afternoon gathering peat, and return in time to do some baking before supper. The shepherd himself walked many miles over the moor in search of certain sheep, drove them to the fold, sheared a dozen or more, and took a number of dry fleeces away with him to market.

In other words, I did not find them differing greatly in regard to work from most other people in the south of Ireland. Southern Ireland has its faults. There is a noticeable shiftlessness among many of its inhabitants, and frequently a slovenliness which is quite unnecessary. But I disagree entirely with the allegation that the Irishman in Ireland is lazy. Give the average Irishman *work to do* and he will do it to his full strength or beyond his strength. The national difficulty is not so much in *working* as in *overcoming the inertia to go out after new work*. That is the greatest obstacle which the Irish must face in the building up of their nation.¹

That inertia is easy enough to understand. Times without number, under the old régime, child murder was com-

¹ A second obstacle appeared to be the excessive amount of stout and porter consumed, which, in many cases among the poorer people, seemed to be taken almost as an opiate to relieve the sense of obligation and the sense of strain.

mitted on the infant industries until the land became keyed to failure and despair. But once let Ireland put its full faith in the new order, and at that moment will come the beginning of the end of its long economic tragedy.

These, you understand, are only the opinions of a man with a donkey. But while he is saying these things, let him add this too: that in his opinion the end of that tragedy is very close at hand.

JOHN TIERNAN

CHAPTER XIV

1

As I left the house of the shepherd, there came out of the exorbitant rains, a mid-July day which would have made the rarest day in June look pale and underdone; a day as lovely as the loveliness of a mature woman—which is much lovelier than that of a young girl, who more than likely has never had anything to be unlovely about.

From Leenane on Killery Bay, ten miles onward toward Louisburg, ran a stretch of road which was the fairest I had seen in Ireland. After the village and fjord which was Norway, and the mountain torrent and forest grove that was Switzerland, came a canyon which was Montana, and beyond it, a lake like a miniature Sea of Galilee.

A high tableland and a moor rose beyond the lake, and on the moor were several small thatched villages, at one of which I stopped for a piece of bread and some tea. There were two ancient, bare-footed crones in the hut, and an old man with red mutton-chop whiskers who said that there would be more fighting in Ireland, and a thin, sickly young man who was having his dinner which consisted of bread and tea and bits of soft bacon swimming in its own grease.

In spite of their obvious poverty, they refused all payment for what I had eaten. So, driven to strategy, I left a shilling on the table, saying I had heard that to find a shilling means good luck.

In came another tall old man, very round and dusty and merry, with a pair of small spectacles on his brow, curly hair on his cheeks, and a frayed derby hat on the back of his head. Before he had been in the room a minute he began to talk about one, *Sa-fä-cleze*.

Sa-fä-cleze this and *Sa-fä-cleze* that . . .

I didn't understand him at first, but when I did, I burst out quite unintentionally, "Oh, Sophocles!" and could immediately have bitten off my tongue. However he smiled gayly and said, "Sophocles? Ah well, I never went to college. I was only in a college once, when I took a young lad to the house of a professor. He invited me to stay all night and made me a gentleman and I was eating with him. But that's all I can boast of—one night in college."

There was such a sweetness and humility and dignity about the old fellow that I was entranced. We exchanged names. His was John Tiernan.

"You seem to be interested in education, Mr. Tiernan."

"Yes, I am the teacher of the school up on the hill, and I have taught there forty-four years. You are an American? I had an uncle who was four years with Lee in your Civil War, and he came out of it without losing a pin-feather. He got a great piece of land, but like every Irishman, it was too small for him, so he drank it. His people . . . well . . . They'd all be millionaires now."

We left the cottage together. From the crossroad of the village, miles of the surrounding tableland were visible, framed for the most part in distant blue hills. This was the heart of the County Mayo. Here, if anywhere, should be legends, for this was the native habitat of banshees and fairies and leprecauns who are the shoemakers of the fairies. I inquired of John Tiernan.

"Observe," he said, "that peak over there. Just at its

base between the two points and the next little hill is Lough Conneilla which means, 'where the dog is tied up.' Any one who wants a dog fight let him come and bring his dog at twelve the night, and a queer dog will rise up and fight his dog. That was verified three generations ago. A man came and the queer dog tore the living dog. And the man died soon after.

"Over there on that sandy hill is the village of Dough Ma Keon where I was bred and born. Long ago, during a great storm, there was a large stone exposed of the sand there, and it measured twelve feet long by three feet broad with a circle cut in it. Two bodies were cast up by the storm from the island of Boffin, and the priest used that stone for them, six feet above ground and six feet below. There was no stone of the same composition this side of the north of Egypt. I was brought up a child playing about it. Men cut the circle in the stone—but who?" He stopped and looked over his spectacles at the small group which had gathered about the cart.

"To my way of thinking, there is no solution but one. Dr. Keating in his Theology states that the Lady Cæsar came to Ireland before the flood, and when her uncle, Noah, would not give her a place in the Ark, she brought her gods away with her, and *this is one of them.*"

He looked to see whether we were impressed.

We were.

"And over there on the Hill of Formila, which is just two miles from Creganbane School (that is, two miles if a man has an aëroplane) there are two graves, one twelve feet long, and one, ten. A battle was given there one hundred and fifty years of the Christian era. It seems that when Finn MacCool and Goll and the other heroes were on the hill at dinner, there came a great gentleman from

Scotland—a red-bearded stranger with red hair and skin as fair as a lily.

“Now the hero Goll had a royalty over the other heroes, and the royalty was that he should get all the marrow from the marrowbones. But the stranger spoke up and said it was high time to change all that. The company had been drinking, and like all Irishmen, were inflammable material when drunk. So the fight began, some on one side, some on the other; and out of it, two heroes fell—Eochy and Aengus—whose graves lie yonder.”

Again we were impressed.

“For the verification of this legend,” continued John Tiernan, “this authority is to be consulted: Volume II, Ossianic Society, Duanavera Finn, edited by Eoin McNeill. Until this investigation, all knowledge about the graves was—*hermetically sealed in an impenetrable oblivion.*”

Now I was wearing a pair of shell-rimmed spectacles at the time, and when John Tiernan made that final pronouncement, I suppose that I smiled, raising my cheeks a little. At any rate, one of the side pieces, which was loose, fell off and dropped into the road at our feet while the rest of the spectacles remained on my nose.

“Begorra, John,” said a sudden little man who stood beside him, “don’t say another like that or you’ll smash thim up entirely!”

So we stood about the cart, John Tiernan and all, roaring like a bevy of Irish bulls, even until tears came into our eyes, and Grania looked around with an expression which was not far from rage.

2

“. . . and over there,” continued the school teacher, “is the village of Altoir which means altar, with another stone in it eight feet by ten feet, supported on the sides by smaller stones and most appropriate for the Roman Catholic service of Holy Mass. But how the stone came there, no one of the world can tell. And that great mountain is Croagh (crow) Patrick shining out in all its majesty.”

“I’m shinin’ out fer me dinner,” said the little man; and he left, and the others left too, so that Mr. Tiernan and I were alone.

“The school is just a minute down the road—if you care to see it. Of course, we are having our summer holiday now.”

Holiday or no holiday, when he opened the door of the little national school—there were six or seven small lads and girls at their desks busily reading! This was such a strange circumstance during vacation that I inquired into it further.

“Ah,” he said, “it’s all in the teaching. First you must have the enthusiasm yourself. Enthusiasm . . . That comes from the Greek word which means, ‘putting the god into them.’ First start the fire, then make the young minds your equals, and drive the fire in. . . . Here is a book I am spinning into Irish for them.”

“Do your school regulations insist on certain books being used?”

“No, this is of my own choosing.”

I looked casually at the title of the small volume which the old fellow was translating—and received such a thrill as I had hardly had before in Ireland.

Robert Louis Stevenson's *Kidnapped*!

"John Tiernan," I said from my heart, "I wish that when I was a lad I had been in your classes, for I would be a better man for it today."

His eyes filled with tears. "That's very good of you, now; very good . . . When I was young, I used to get up in the green of the dawn to study. I wanted to be the greatest scholar of the world. I used to think of what my uncle heard General Lee say: 'I'll water my horse in Tennessee or in hell . . .' But *he* lost—and here I am."

"It's a great work—teaching the young as you do it."

"Ah—we must do what we can. This is where I belong. When I go outside these horizons, I am like a bear traveling over hot places until I get back. Good-by now, and the best luck of the world to 'you,'" he said, grasping my hand. Then I went down the highway towards Louisburg and Westport, and left him wiping his spectacles, which had become dimmed in the gentle, eager emotion of his pleasure and pride.

I have come across his name in my notebook, written in his small, scholarly hand. Here it is:

John Tiernan

I like to think that it comes from Tirnan-og, which, in Irish, means the Country of Eternal Youth.

TO ACHILL

CHAPTER XV

1

CLOSE at one side of the Westport road lay Clew Bay. Close on the other rose the mountain called Croagh Patrick. Closer still swept the wind and rain and mist, wrapping us completely in a too-well-ventilated, sixty-foot-in-diameter opaque shroud. But in spite of the shutting-in fog, this was to be learned: that the richest, most gratifying mixture which the lungs can find is a mist-laden sea-wind blowing in across fields of semi-dried hay.

Three little boys came running up crying, "Sir, sir, have you any fishes?" I said I had not, but they failed to believe me, so that when I came to a village half a mile down the road, three women came out with their pocket-books all ready to buy salmon or trout or flounder or whatever.

A little farther on, I met an old woman with fine eyes and a chuckle, who was carrying a load of faggots. "Now God bless you," she said, setting down the faggots to rest; "the weather's turned soft again."

"So it has," I said. "Did you get your peat dry during the fine weather yesterday?"

"Never a piece of the world," she answered, chuckling.

"This will be bad for the hay, too," I remarked grinning sympathetically.

"'Twill," she agreed, chuckling again. And not satisfied with that, she threw up her hands and gave a laugh as though the judgment day had come and she were among the

sheep. So we stood there in the road laughing at each other for some time—why, I haven't the least idea—but I know that when we went on, we both felt better for it.

Soon I needed a knife to cut my bread for lunch. But the bread knife was in the paint box doing duty for my palette knife which I had lost down a crack in the Aran Islands. Here was a shabby two-roomed cabin where I could borrow a knife. I knocked and went in.

There were eleven people in the living room—an old woman, a young couple and their eight children, seven of whom were boys. The oldest child, I found, was eight years. The children had all come singly, except the two youngest who were twins a month old, lying with eyes hardly open, side by side in a large soap box—as though nature had said, “For *goodness* sake—*here!*”

There were only three chairs in the room, but the young father immediately rose from his, made me sit down and gave me a cup of milk. Little boys of assorted sizes, resting themselves first on one leg and then on the other, stood against the walls. They seemed to be waiting for something. As I shared my raisin bread with them, there came to my mind the bizarre notion that they were waiting to grow up and go to America.

“Are you the grandmother?” I asked of the old woman who was holding one of the youngest on her knee.

“Faith no. I'm only a neighbor like. If I was the grandmother of these, I'd be in silks and satins. . . . Are you climbing the Reek on Sunday?”

Now I am a man of fairly strong stomach, and a man who likes children. But what with some mud I had discovered on my cup, and the reek in the room, and the word, Reek, on the old woman's lips, and the two little soft ones in the soap box, it became urgently necessary for me to

seek the great open spaces at once, even before finding out what was meant by climbing the Reek.

But it was explained to me later in Westport that "the Reek," which means the highest hill, was the mountain, Croagh Patrick, and it was from the top of this mountain that St. Patrick had expelled the snakes from Ireland. The following Sunday would see the annual pilgrimage, with thousands of pilgrims, many of whom would be bare-footed, climbing to its crest.

I resolved to be present. Meanwhile there was a journey to be made to the island called Achill (Ackil).

2

If you choose, you may rise at five to take the mail-truck which leaves Westport (so you understand) at six. While you are eating a hot, hard-boiled egg which a sleepy maid has over-prepared, you become anxious about the time, and after a last gulp of tea, you hasten—with a paint box in one hand and half of your breakfast in the other—down the street to the post office which is the starting point of the lorry.

Arriving there, you note a faint, suspicious effluvium of burned gas on the air, and you turn just in time to see the end of the lorry go round a corner a block away. You furiously hurl the diminished fourth of your breakfast to the ground, grip your canvas in one hand and your paints in the other, and dash like an insane artist in a Mack Sennett comedy after the disappearing lorry. By the wildest stroke of bull-headed luck, the driver sees you as the lorry rounds another corner.

"They told me last night that you were to leave at six," you puff.

"Oh—any time between a quarter of six and six!"

"But I left word that I was going with you!" (puff puff.)

"Sure I thought this gentleman was yourself!"

And there on the seat where you should be, with his "luggage" on the floor where your "baggage" should be (puff puff) is an Englishman who is traveling for a Yorkshire woolen mills to Achill to sell yarn to be knitted into garments by the women at one of the Irish government's new knitting works, (puff puff.) As you are getting back your breath, he tells you that these factories were first established by the government's Congested Districts Board, then transferred to the Irish Land Commission, and finally turned over to the Ministry of Fisheries—although just what the Ministry of fisheries has to do with the knitting of woolen garments it is difficult to say. Unless, perhaps, it is the wives and daughters of fishermen who do the knitting.

At any rate, you feel that it is the first faint quiver of the eyelid of a new commercial Ireland, which, given a fighting chance, will presently come to life and action.

And now, looking out across a great sweep of mountain and sea and wind-swept fields of turf with tiny whitewashed houses hugging the vast hills for protection, it seems to you that Achill, perhaps more than any other frontier of Ireland, is open to the wrath and pleasure of the gods. Man seems so tiny against those terrific hillsides! His very presence here is a shout of defiance. Even the red skirts of the women are a richer, more militant red than the skirts of the mainland.

Soon you discover that this journey by the Irish mail is an excellent and inexpensive way to see the island. At Achill Sound, the sacks are transferred to a comfortable

touring car, after which change, you zig-zag for more than an hour over a dozen roads, to Bunacurry and Dugort and Cashel, finally heading for Keel at the far western end of the land.

As you go up the road toward the latter village, the driver, who has cast several speculative glances at your canvas says, "There is a painter named Henry living out beyond Keel. They say he is a millionaire."

"A painter *and* a millionaire?" you repeat incredulously.

"Yes. Some say he is Irish and some say he is American."

You consider the matter. This may possibly be one of two well-known painters, Robert Henri of the American Academy, who has spent some time in Ireland, or Paul Henry, an Irish landscape painter who lived for several years on Achill. But here is the village of Keel where the Englishman stops to do some business.

3

Keel is a tidy fishing village with a very good inn, several automobiles, neat, whitewashed cottages, and the small government knitting works employing thirty-five women who turn out a hundred knitted costumes a week.

It seems hardly possible that little more than a century ago, this village was inhabited by a migratory people of a type which might have existed in the Bronze Age. Yet here is the surprising testimony of Sir William Wilde written in 1835:

"There are several villages in Achill, particularly those of Keene and *Keele*, where the huts of the inhabitants are all circular or oval, and built for the most part of round, water-washed stones, collected from the beach, and ar-

ranged, without lime or any other cement, exactly as we have good reason to believe that the habitations of the ancient Firbolgs were constructed. . . . During the spring the population of several of the villages we allude to in Achill close their winter dwellings, tie their infant children on their backs, carry with them their loys (narrow spades), and some corn and potatoes, with a few pots and cooking utensils, drive their cattle before them, and emigrate to the hills, where they find fresh pastures for their flocks; and there they build rude huts or summer houses, of sods and wattles, called booleys, and then cultivate and sow with corn a few fertile spots in the neighboring valleys. They thus remain for about two months of the spring and early summer, till the corn is sown; their stock of provisions being exhausted, and the pasture consumed by the cattle, they return to the shore, and eke out a miserable and precarious existence by fishing &c. No further care is ever taken of the crops; indeed they seldom ever visit them, but return in the autumn, in a manner similar to the spring migration, to reap the corn and afford sustenance to their half-starved cattle. With these people, it need scarcely be wondered that there is annually a partial famine."

4

As you stand contemplating the modern village of Keel, the lorry man comes up and says, "I won't have to start back until 1:20. If you like, I'll drive you out to the painter's house. It is only four miles from here."

So off you go along the wide curve of coast, past the fishing village of Dooeh and up an unspeakably rough road toward a long, low, gray house and a distant hillside. As you bump along you think to yourself, "Mr. Henry or Henri

has certainly chosen his home just as far to the west as the law of possibility allows. And as for the original builder of the place, he apparently did his best to attain complete isolation from his kind."

Here are two massive gray gate columns, and beyond them, the long, well-designed, well-built house, looking enigmatically out across a wide, magnificent view of hill and village, and vast cathedralesque cliffs beyond the bay.

As you descend, a beaming Irish housekeeper appears at the door and says, "Welcome to the western world!" Yes, this *is* the house of Mr. Henri, the American artist. He has not come down to breakfast yet, she says, but she takes up your card, returning in a moment to say that himself will descend betimes. A few moments later, himself does appear—a tall, thin, slightly-stooping man in a suit of vivid blue, a man with swarthy skin, straight black mustache and somewhat Chinese eyes which you at once recognize from portraits you have seen in various exhibitions in the United States; a man quite as pleasant as one can expect of an American who has gone to the world's end for solitude or whatnot, and then is awakened by the bark of a Ford motor in his front yard with a strange American in it from his own city.

As you talk together it comes to you—after your daily benediction of Irish hospitality—that in the east of the United States we have not made the art of hospitality to the stranger a fine art. In fact, we *can't*. There is too much of bogus in the east, bogus of every nationality under the sun. If a man in New York were to display to strangers the hospitality of a man in Cork, he would be picked as clean as a skeleton in the Natural History Museum in less than a week.

This thought in its turn is forgotten in observing the

other's sincere, pre-breakfast effort toward that same hospitality which—through a combination of climate and nature and a necessary precaution against fakers and gunmen—most of us who live east of the Alleghenies simply do not possess. Mr. Henri tells you that he first journeyed to Achill in 1913, and rented the strange old house for the summer. Then came the Great War and the troubles in Ireland, so that 1924 was the first year it had been possible to return with comfort.

Then, as you go together into the house with its peculiar, oblique paneling, Spanish-looking patio, and long narrow conservatory, he relates the story of its original owner.

It was built and occupied in the 1870's by one, Captain Boycott, a rich farmer-landlord and a very hard man. Parnell, the Irish patriot, evolved a plan in 1880 to punish men for unjust acts—a kind of social excommunication. Captain Boycott, who, it was alleged, had paid the workmen on his house an unthinkable small stipend, was the first to be tested under Parnell's plan.

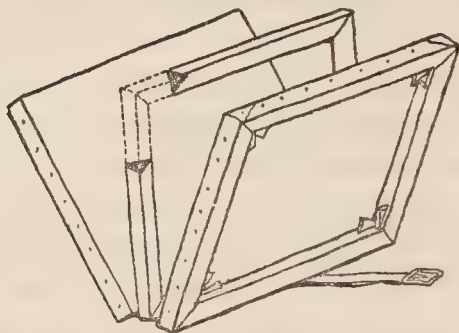
The plan worked. His tenants not only "boycotted" him, but expressed their opinion in a very characteristic way. They did not say it with flowers but with cobblestones. He was forced to drive furiously at night up the very road where the motor has passed, under frequently repeated salvos of bowlders and brickbats—which, by every indication, have been left where they fell.


Eventually, Captain Boycott was called away on important business and did not return.

This consolation is his: that his name, as a noun and a verb may be found in most of the dictionaries of Europe. . . .

Pondering these things, you go into the studio which is to the left of the hall. In this room, you note a table

covered with neutral gray and topped by a flat piece of glass—a painter's ideal palette. Now Mr. Henri graciously remembers that he has heard your name before. He has even looked over some of your books but has not read them. . . . To which confession you reply that you have done the same, and you sometimes wonder who the deuce does read them, although your publisher's advertisements say that it is done by the best people. He has almost forgotten about breakfast now and asks you how you carry your oil sketches on a donkey cart without rubbing them. He draws a picture of the way he carries his when carrying is necessary. His method consists in cutting down the inside of a wooden stretcher (of uniform size with his canvases) and placing the skeleton stretcher between them like this:



Your method, by which two wet face-to-face sketches are held apart by four of these clips:  is not so good as his, for it allows small sticks and dust to be blown in by the great wind of the west onto your freshly painted canvases. It was the same wind, you say, which blew your palette knife down a twelve-foot crack in the Aran Islands.

"Have you no other?" he asks.

"Unfortunately, that was the only one."

"I don't like to see a workman without his tools." He

disappears into the studio, returning in a few moments with a small palette knife. "This is one I don't use very much. I'd be glad to have you take it."

So you accept it with thanks, and a few hours later when you look at a sketch you have just finished of the strand at Slievemore across the island, you console yourself for a technique which so far in your life has never fully pleased you, by this thought: that it was made with the aid of Robert Henri's palette knife.

5

John Sheridan of Slievemore Mountain in his time has been a remarkable man. The commodious halls of Slievemore Hotel are filled with strange collections of birds and beasts from beyond the horizon. Among other rare books on his library shelves is a volume on navigation, dated 1595, by the famous geographer, Mercator, whose projection is still used on many of our maps—a tome which would be welcomed in any museum in the world.

The walls of the hotel are covered with John Sheridan's own paintings—vast canvases of savage cliffs and sea, strange curiosities in a misunderstood medium—gigantic surfaces of canvas upon which a fiery, undeveloped painter-urge is overcome and enchained by Victorian convention. Yet in at least one of those paintings there is the reflection of a glowing spark, the echo of a far cry, the fleeting glimpse of a star.

In his day he must have been the most affable host in Ireland. Now he sits with his occasional guests in the sun on the veranda of the splendid old hotel telling fragments of genial stories:

"Colonel Younghusband was here . . . Colonel Young-

husband who went right into Thibet and into Lhasa before any other white man . . . went right into the city when it was death. I built him a fire in that grate—a big fire—and he said it was hot enough, and hotter than Thibet. . . .

“General Philip Sheridan? Phil Sheridan’s father and my grandfather were brothers. Cavan, they came from. His father it was, went to America. There are many men from Achill in America. In Cleveland, if you let a stone drop from a window, it will strike an Achill man. . . . My grandfather was blind from his youth. He played the old Irish pipes from the first, but when he came to Westport I don’t know. . . .

“And how we fought to bridge the island with the mainland! That *was* a fight! Sir Thomas Brady from the Fisheries Commission came down, and a ~~man~~ from Achill Sound got up to testify.

“‘Are there many kinds of fish here?’ Sir Thomas asked.

“‘Sure every kind of fish, your Honor.’”

“‘Every kind? Do you have flying fish?’

“‘Sure your Honor, we have to shut the ~~windows~~ at night to keep them out.’

“‘And do you have dogfish?’

“‘Faith, your Honor, we don’t get a wink of sleep for the barkin’!’

“There was another man made light of the fisheries in Parliament, and I got up and trod him down. . . .

“Sir Harry Johnson, the explorer, was here, and he told me to take care of that African antelope, for it was the best in the house. And Fred Jackson was here—a friend of Johnson’s who was wrecked near Zanzibar, and was three weeks alone in an open boat, and was paralyzed from too much ship. And damned if he didn’t come out of his trouble and come here a fine strong man. There’s an

African hartbeeste named after him . . . I have his pelvis upstairs. . . .”

Fred Jackson's pelvis? Presumably not, for John Sheridan's stories are based on firm realities. In browsing over the archives of the hotel, one may come with a sudden, keen-awakening interest on the following letter, written two decades ago by Sir Harry Johnson, explorer, naturalist, associate of Cecil Rhodes, author of *The Gay-Donbays*, *The Veneerings*—a letter to which the present writer, in as far as his knowledge goes, can fully subscribe:

“I conclude with great regret my first brief visit to the beautiful and wonderful Island of Achill. I am afraid to praise it as it deserves lest such poor praise attract to it those hordes of excursionists from the great cities who are ruining the Isle of Man, Killarney, North Devon, the Western Highlands, and the Isle of Wight. I wish I could say that though the scenery is romantic, the hotel accommodation is uncomfortable. But it isn't. The hotel is all that one could wish, its host a man whom it is worth travelling four hundred miles to converse with.

“I can only say to the painter, the naturalist, and the weary town dweller, Achill Island is what they have all been looking for. The view from Croaghan Mountain and its saddle toward Croagh Patrick across Clew Bay and again the sheer descent (over 2000 feet) of the cliffs of Croaghan to the Atlantic—one of the thousand bits of finest scenery in the world. To the naturalist I would say that the Cornish chough is as common and as tame as the Spanish sparrow in London.

HARRY H. JOHNSON
G. C. H. G. K. C. B.

27 Chester Terrace
N. W. London.

ST. PATRICK'S MOUNTAIN

CHAPTER XVI

1

A BRAND new motor bus, bursting with pilgrims at two shillings a head, whirled along the road from Westport toward the holy mountain. The rain had stopped, and while the crown of Croagh Patrick, eight miles away, was swathed like Fujiyama in mist, the center of its pyramidal bulk was clearly enough to be seen towering above the surrounding hills.

This was a good day for motor owners, the driver told me—the best day of all. On that day the previous year he had made £87 with a Ford car—hence the new motor bus today. Business, of course, depended on speed.

At every curve along the road, Civic Guards were stationed. Though their intentions were of the best, being a young organization they did not fully understand either the power of their authority nor the rules of the road as their fellow Irishmen do at Fifth Avenue and Forty-second Street. It was also desperately clear that Irish roads in those parts were not built for speeding. But speed we did, and so did every one else; and if some few of us were not borne heavenward that day in six-cylinder chariots of back-fire it was only because St. Patrick himself was directing the traffic.

The road about the two small hotels at the base of the mountain was thronged with thousands of arriving pilgrims. Here and there were groups of those who had already made the long ascent, their faces shining, their clothes in disarray.

Up a spur of the mountain above us ran a twisting, sinuous line of wayfarers. To the right Croagh Patrick reared its great form, a vast truncated pyramid in two tones of purple, looking more than anything else like a gigantic mound of purple coal of which the outside layer had corroded to a deeper shade, then being disturbed here and there, had slipped away showing a lighter purple beneath.

For the most part, the pilgrims ascended and descended in silence. Naturally there was a little restraint, but occasionally, their unquenchable humor bubbled out.

"My, there's a lot of them coming down."

"Watch it, or you'll be coming down too!"

"That's what I'm thinking meself. Any minute! It wouldn't do to have a hobble skirt on, would it now?"

"Lord save us, no! I'm after hobbling as it is!"

So up they went, bare-footed many of them, over patches of rough rocks, and greasy mud, and slippery pebbles—clergy, laity, rich, poor, young, old.

Halfway to the top I fell in with two intelligent men who were Republicans and whose joint imprisonment under the Free State had amounted to five years.

"How is it that you are here on this church affair?" I asked, for I knew that the church had favored the Free State.

"We are not opposed to the church," they said.

"But I understand from the Republicans in Tralee that the church was losing ground among the Republicans."

"No," they answered. "At least seventy-five per cent of the people on this pilgrimage are Republicans."

But here was the first Station of the Cross, with a great silent crowd kneeling about it. I read the instructions with interest.

Kneeling, say Our Father and Hail Mary seven times

and the Creed. Walk around this mound seven times praying. Kneeling, say Our Father and Hail Mary seven times and the Creed.

The traditional practice is to perform the Station on bare feet.

2

And here, after a final desperate stretch of crumbling shale which seemed to slip back two feet for every forward step taken, came the summit, with Father John Gibbons, a keen young priest I had met in Westport, standing beside the path with salt brine on his brow from the climb.

I had spent an evening in the consistory in Westport with another priest and himself, and as we now waited to get our breath, I remembered a story which he had told about an old blind woman in the workhouse above the town. She was an invalid and spent most of her time in bed saying over her prayers and singing her songs.

One day, as Father Gibbons came through the rooms with the matron, she inquired, "Is that a priest going past my bed?"

"It is, Nora."

"Well, could I speak with him a moment? There is something bothering me, a scruple like. Are you the priest?"

"I am. Can I do something for you?"

"You won't be laughing at me?"

"No, of course not."

"But you won't?"

"I won't indeed. Why should I be the one to be laughing at you?"

"Well, Father, it's a scruple I have. Sometimes, telling

my beads over and over, and singing the same songs, I get a little tired the way a person might, and then I make pictures for myself. And I imagine myself in the little house of Mary, and she working about, doing this and that and sweeping out the room. And sometimes I stand outside the door, but other times I make bold and enter the inside, and help her with her work. Sometimes I take the child from her and hold it in my arms and sing to it and call it pet names.

"It's the pet names . . . I want to ask you, Father John—is that making too free with God?"

Now the priest and I went together through the refreshment stands and the dense crowd before the little chapel into the sacristy for a cup of tea. Other priests were there, tired but uncomplaining, they who had service for the early pilgrims. First mass had been held at six in the morning and there had been nine hundred in attendance—which meant that all those who had participated had risen at midnight or earlier.

In the sacristy was a kindly and fraternal intimacy.

"You go home now, Father Victor, you have done good work."

"Father Tom, will you hear confession from a few? We are getting every one to do a little work today."

"Have I the faculties in this parish?"

"Yes, it's all right. You have."

"Then I'll hear as many as need be."

The voice of another priest, speaking to the crowd outside came in through the window.

". . . therefore I beg St. Patrick to bless you and to bless all of us. On this mountain, undisturbed by man, he came often into the wilderness to pray, and here God gave him

great clarity and power of vision. You are here from all parts of Ireland, and you will take away the blessing of St. Patrick with you."

After this seriousness, shall I write down a short strangely-different epilogue which took place a few hours later? Yes, I shall. Why? Because in the heart of Ireland—beyond the power of priest or pastor or Civic Guard or poet or Lord-Lieutenant or reformer—is something which is the joy of these and their despair. It is a defiance of authority, a leaven, a freedom, a flight, an unrestraint. It is a feeling. It cannot be described in words. Certainly I cannot express it. Perhaps you who read may gather it best from their own lips:

The scene is laid in a third class railway coach traveling north from Westport. (But first I must explain that I had left Grania at Lough Conn and now, after the pilgrimage, was returning to Foxford, the nearest station to Lough Conn—hence my presence on the train.) The carriage was filled with farm people and mill workers coming back from the mountain, tired out and lying asleep against each other's shoulders—all save three.

These were a small dark man with huge shoulders and a pair of black mustaches like horns of a bison; his wife, a stout large-hipped woman with a little hat perched on her head; and her friend, another huge woman with gold teeth and a magnificent laugh. Their weariness had brought on a mood of whimsicality.

FRIEND: Oh I'm kilt, I'm disabled. Me foot hurts something awful.

WIFE: Well, now you can say you were sufferin' for St. Patrick.

FRIEND: It was a good day annyway, and it did us all good.

WIFE: It did indeed. I believe himself won't swear any more.

MAN: I'll swear like hell before I get home! (*Laughter.*)

FRIEND: But it isn't from the heart. It's only on the tongue, just.

WIFE: Sure it's on the tongue too often! Didn't you hear what the bishop said? He said we should make our lives agree with what we say, otherwise we won't be happy in our grave.

MAN (*yawning*): That's a great shop, the grave. You can sleep sounder than McCarty there, for a queer long time with nothin' botherin'.

FRIEND: They say the dead wandher about with the pain of hell in thim.

WIFE (*slowly*): I have that power I can see them when I wish. . . .

MAN: Naw! In all the time I've been livin' with you, you never met with a ghost yet.

FRIEND: Annyway, they're no worse off than me with me foot. (*Looking out of the window:*) I'm hopin' 'tis the right road we're on.

MAN: Unless you change cars, this is the road to hell!

FRIEND (*overcome with laughter*): O Jaysus-Mary-'n'-Joseph!

WIFE (*a little crossly to man*): You'd best go right back and climb the Reek again!

FRIEND (*still laughing*): Sure the priest says there's thousands of thim goin' there every day.

MAN: Where? The Reek?

FRIEND: No, the other place. (*They laugh together.*)

WIFE: Was there anny pickpockets on the Reek today?

MAN: No, not one. Why?

WIFE (*thoughtfully*): I seen a woman cryin'. . . .

3

Sometime when you have nothing else to do, try coming into the town of Tubbercurry at 9:30 P.M. after twelve donkey-hours of driving rain, and try to find lodgings for yourself and your donkey. Not wishing you any ill-luck, however, I'll direct you at once to the town photographer, who will put you up very nicely in his temperance hotel. But it is doubtful whether he will have place for your donkey. At least he had no place for mine. I inquired for blocks around, but no one wanted to put up a donkey.

I broached the question to a group of men in front of a public house. No . . . They encouraged each other manfully, however. "You put it up, Mike." "Naw, I have no room." "How about you, Bill?" "Stable's full." "What about you, then, Finnigan?" "No . . ."

"I'll pay for it, of course." But they didn't want to make the initial effort.

"COME ON THEN!" It was a small man with a grim, determined face and the loveliest black eye I had so far seen in the County Sligo. We walked down the street together. "Get the donkey and bring it to this corner," he commanded.

Fifteen minutes later, Grania was watered, fed, housed and bedded. In the meantime, my abrupt but friendly ally and I had been talking together.

What were the sentiments of the people in the south, he asked. I told him that on the whole I had found the south keyed to sovereignty. He shook his head dubiously. He wasn't so sure of that. England would never stand for it

at all at all. The way some people felt, England could come in again without a shot being fired. . . . "If the small farmer who makes up seventy per cent of the population should vote in a general election—no matter what he *says*—I wonder, would he vote a Republic? The country is better off as it is. A Free State? It is more than their utmost dreams a few years ago. Parnell, Michael Davitt, poor John Redmond . . . (They're forgotten now but they were very valuable then.) If you had told one of them there would be a Free State, they would tell you to stick your finger in your eye. It was the landlords they were after then, but they're all gone now. . . .

"It was a clean movement, the Fenian movement. Only good men in it. No spies, no crooked work. If a man weren't good, they'd send him back his subscription. Very little violence; no more than necessary. If they popped a man down it was a big man, not a little one."

As we walked toward the hotel, he spoke of the town and its surroundings. "An old town," he said, "a very old town. And the hill beyond is Knocknasheé."

"Is there a story about it?"

"Aye. Some poetry." We stopped where we were on the street and, to the tune of Auld Lang Syne, he began to sing in a very passable voice:

"The mountains, dales and valleys
Of Ireland shall be free;
It's standing there so grand and fair
The Hill of Knocknasheé."

"That was first composed, I think, in America by a boy named John Gilmore out of New York City, and he did it well. There is more to it but that is all I know. Do you remember any more, Mrs. Andrews?" he asked of a woman

who had opened a window above us when he began to sing.

"No, it's so long since those times, Mr. Cook. But there's some of the young people sing it at the house again."

"Would you mind sending me the words, Mrs. Andrews?"

"Not at all, Mr. Cook. I'll be glad and obliged to send them. . . . Why don't you stop in some time?"

4

"Cook," I mused. "That's not an Irish name, is it?"

He gave a sardonic cackle of mirth. "No," he said, "it's Italian!"

Cook? Andrews? This slightly altered sense of humor?

I realized with a start that I was getting toward the North.

5

There is no possible doubt about a subtle change in the temperament of the people as you go northward. I make this statement as a result of daily observation as we ground along, foot after foot, yard after yard, past every sort of vehicle and every sort of passenger on the highway. I noticed the first trace of northern reserve in County Sligo south of Tubbercurry. There was an indefinable change in the manner of the people along the road. They were just as friendly and obliging as ever, yet that intangible change was there.

If this was perceptible while one was still in the "South," what sort of reception would one have in Ulster?

That, however, was not to be answered yet, for intervening was the matter of the Tailteann Games.

TO QUEEN TAILTÉ

CHAPTER XVII

1

IF you will look again at the chart of adventure adhering to the inside covers of this book, you will see a line of travel directly across the midlands joining Sligo and Dublin. That journey was not accomplished by donkey-and-man-power, but by rail. The occasion for this deflection from the path of duty so plainly marked along the coast, was a series of events in Dublin which began on August 2nd, 1924, and which were known as the Aonach Tailteann, or more familiarly as the Tailteann Games.

As I sat in the swift, comfortable train of the Midland Great Western, speeding across the beautiful country from Sligo, my mind traveled pleasantly forward to the approaching festivities. These Games were the first love child of the Free State's government—a government which in the southwest and west I had found to be unpopular.

(But, I thought, would any government in Ireland be entirely popular? What was it that King Malachi had said to King Brian? "In my opinion, you will not see entire peace or the end of quarrels in Ireland, till such time as the grass stops growing or talk comes to the thrush.")

During two months of travel, I had found the south and west almost entirely lethargic about the impending celebra-

tion. "The Tailteann Games were to come when we had peace," they complained.

"But you have peace!"

"*What* a peace!" they answered.

The Republicans went so far as to boycott the Games. In spite of that, Mr. de Valera, President of the Republic had been invited to attend the opening ceremonies. If both President de Valera of the Republic and President Cosgrove of the Free State appeared, then there would be two presidents of southern Ireland present! Would Dublin, I wondered, with the help of God, Leinster, and a sense of humor, be able to carry the thing through?

2

Almost two thousand years before the Christian era, the Tailteann Games were instituted in honor of Queen Taité, a lovely lady who was dead. First came vast and impressive ceremonies for the departed—the mourning chants, the dirges, the Cepóg—that weird but beautiful elegy—and at last the burning of the fragile body on the huge funeral pyre.

Then the great Games began. They consisted not only in physical contests such as javelin throwing, swimming, hurling, high jumping, running, wrestling, armed combat, archery, and chariot racing, but also in contests of the mind. Aspirants for literary, musical, oratorical honors competed before competent judges. There were singing and dancing and story-telling contests. Then too, artisans and artificers were judged on the quality of their golden bracelets and jewelry and shields and swords and dye.

It may well have been that there were contests for the best rhubarb marmalade and pigeon pie. Who knows, after two thousand years? There were also great marts at the Games where native and foreign merchants met on the common ground of barter, bringing from near and far those articles on which they might profit best. Here were swart strangers from beyond the land of Mag Mór bearing cloth that would melt in your hand and vegetables braided into long pale braids with a fragrance like the onion but even more rare. Here were others from beyond Mag Mór's Mare Nostrum, with peacocks and apes and ivory, and amulets of dusky gold.

Who knows what those Phœnician ships might have brought in? Is it permissible to imagine? If so, I like to imagine a group of gigantic, skin-clad cave men from the hills standing bulge-eyed and motionless before a snappy, up-to-the-minute group of Jewish entertainers who are playing the ancient equivalent of *Abie's Irish Rose* and doing a brisk trade in Jordan almonds between acts. I like to imagine a large black African squatting in the midst of a circle of Connoughters, and in his hand two little square white cubes covered with black dots which he throws with great vehemence on the ground saying to the little white cubes, "Come on, you little Moses-in-de-bulrushes! Come on, you Rameses Two! If youah evah goin' to build me dat pyramid—build it now!"

I also like to imagine the august High King, Lughaid Lamhfada himself, standing with the sweat on his brow before a bronze mirror in his tent, helplessly trying to tie a little bow knot in a ribbon at the end of his beard while the heralds outside announce that he is mightier than the sun and the stars.

3

From the death of Queen Taité, the Games became an annual celebration and were continued, with occasional interruptions, for many centuries. At the time of the great champion Finn MacCool so dear to Irish legend, a novel feature was added to the Games in the testing of candidates for the officering of his famous legion the Fianna Eireann.

The competitors, under the watchful eyes of the High King and their great commander Finn, were put through their paces. The fact that failure was not considered a disgrace will be better understood if the gentle reader, or even the reader who is a bit boisterous, will cast an eye over the following rules:

No member shall turn his back or fly from nine warriors who attack him.

No man shall be admitted until he has mastered the Twelve Books of Poetry.

No man shall be admitted until, standing knee-deep in a wide pit, he has shown that he can protect himself, without receiving a scratch, with his shield and a hazel stake no longer than a man's arm, from the attack of nine warriors simultaneously hurling their nine spears from a distance of nine ridges.

No man shall be admitted until, with his hair plaited, he has been chased through several forests with a host of the Fianna in pursuit with the intention of wounding him, and he has shown himself capable of escaping untouched.

No man shall be admitted whose foot shall break a single withered branch in his flight through the forest.

No man shall be admitted unless he can pick a protruding

thorn from his heel without in any manner hindering his speed.

No man shall be admitted unless he is able to jump over the branch of a tree as high as his brow, and stoop under a branch as low as his knee without delaying his speed.

There were still other regulations, but on the whole, these would seem enough.

So the Games went on with one additional diversion or another until 1169 A. D. when they were magnificently celebrated for the last time by Roderick O'Connor, the last High King of Eireann. Since that day the legend has grown up that the Games would not take place again until full peace had come to Ireland.

Seven hundred and fifty-five years!

I leaned back in the comfortable train of the Midland Great Western content that I was going to Dublin and the Games. I would enter and leave the city as a spectator only. I would not present my letter to "A. E." I would see Dublin without any one in Dublin seeing me. I would not even give my name, for it was possible that my name might be associated with the man who was traveling Ireland with a donkey. On the whole, it would be best to avoid making acquaintances.

4

An unfortunate incident occurred as I passed along the platform of the Dublin station. A paper boy held out a paper which I accepted, giving him two pennies in payment. After I had advanced a few paces, I felt a tug at my arm. "Sir—sir—it's only one penny!" and he returned the other!

O Shades of Broadway and Forty-second Street! O rue

de Rivoli! O Dick Whittington and his cat! O Diogenes and his lamp! O B. Franklin and his bun! Come and have a look at this Dublin street gamin!

An unfortunate incident? Certainly! How could one give Dublin the cold appraising eye when Dublin began like that? One couldn't! I liked Dublin from the beginning, and I admit it.

In spite of the imposing width of O'Connell Street (née Sackville Street) the first impression of Dublin in peace is one of friendly and good-natured intimacy. Coming in at the Midland Station, one finds the city a little messy and a little soiled, but it is smiling broadly at one, and that smile continues.

The River Liffey, running east to west and spanned by a dozen or more bridges, bisects the city. The wide esplanade of O'Connell Street which runs at right angles to the river, is fastened firmly to the foundations of Irish history by five statues all in a row. The middle-most of these is the high Nelson Pillar—the axis about which the life of Dublin revolves.

Across the bridge, O'Connell Street splays out into Westmoreland Street and D'Olier Street, which, a square or two farther on—and without any apparent effort—become Grafton Street and Great Brunswick Street, leaving Trinity College and its park on the delta between; while St. Stephen's Green and Merrion Square occupy places still farther up the delta.

The city may be more clearly visualized by thinking of O'Connell Street as the trachea, Grafton Street and Great Brunswick Street as the bronchial tubes, Trinity College as the heart, St. Stephen's Green and Merrion Square as the lungs, thus:



(There are those, however, who would by no means call Trinity College the heart of Dublin.)

The committee of street decoration for the Games had worked hard and well. Dublin was looking her best. Banners, posters, decorative lights were everywhere. "Fresh little trees in green little tubs" stood in attractive rows along the thoroughfares. Ingeniously-dividing bowls filled with flowering plants were clamped together about the lamp posts out of the reach of hands. The skirling of pipes and the gay grunting vibrations of brass bands traveled with ululations of delight over the city's anatomy. "Dublin in Festive Mood," said the newspapers, and they went on in a delightfully homelike and delightfully Irish way to exhort such citizens as could not engage in larger enterprises for

the city's beautification to give an extra rub to the door knockers and put a fresh pair of curtains at the windows.

So here was Dublin of a Friday evening, all dressed in its best, with a warm, pleasant feeling of anticipation in its heart, and with floods of visitors pouring in for the opening of the Games on the morrow. . . . And then . . . *the lights went out!* The street lights, all the electric lights over the city except those on the street cars, went out, and did not come on again. Dublin was in the grip of a municipal strike. `

5

I went into a cinema which claimed good light and found the picture to be apparently illuminated by an oil lamp. After half an hour of having my eyes pulled out bodily, I departed into the crowd on O'Connell Street where in the light of a passing car, I saw a familiar face. It was one of the Republican lads I had met at Tralee.

I expressed my pleasure at seeing him, and some surprise. The Games, I thought, were being boycotted by the Republicans. . . .

"That's right," he said. "I sha'n't go to the games. But I lived in Dublin a year, you know, and now when I go down below, I get a little restless; so once in a while I come back. Besides, I have work to do with the Organization. Would you like to meet some of our people? I'll arrange a meeting for you, if possible, with Countess Markevicz."

"Do you mean the Countess Markevicz of the Irish Revolution?"

"Yes."

"I'd be delighted to meet her." We arranged a tentative appointment.

Just then the lights came on in a few places, and a cheer went up from the crowd. The illumination lasted long enough to show that it was ten o'clock, but it was desultory at best. A man in uniform came into a pastry shop where we were standing, to say that the lights should be turned off at once. He was followed by another man to say that they should be left on. But in a moment the lights went out themselves.

"Now indeed, did you ever see the like of this!" said another man beside us. "It might be all right in the Fiji Islands—but that's the way it is with the Irish. And what will the strangers think, indeed? They should be so angered that they would go right home to England [he thought I was English] and never stir into this God-forsaken land again, indeed."

But in the heart of one stranger who went to bed by candle-light that night, there throbbed not anger, but a friendly mirth and a particular interest to see how this celebration within a celebration would turn out.

6

All the men of Dublin
Are squabblin', are troublin',

All the girls of Dublin
Are bubblin' with glee.

All the streets are tomb-like
Are gloom-like, are doom-like . . .

*"Johnnie come and hold me hand
There's nobody to see!"*

7

"Thirty Thousand Thrown Idle," said the papers next morning. "Three-fourths of the industries of Dublin are paralyzed today, involving fully thirty thousand men. There is no public lighting, streets are unswept, dust-bins unemptied, and the whole social life of the city is threatened."

"Sir," said a letter to the editor of one of the papers, "There was a danger that the Tailteann Games would bring a little monetary relief to our hard-pressed city and give the workers, employed and unemployed, a chance of earning a little money. That danger is unhappily averted, thanks to the workers themselves, ever ready as they are to saw off the branch on which they sit. . . ."

But tucked away in a corner of the same paper was an example of that courageous, indomitable "lift" which I had seen so often on my journey.

"Streets are beginning to become unsightly, and in some places, unpleasant; but *the condition is generally much better than one might expect. . . .*"

8

The stadium at Croke Park was a blaze of color. Its gateways, especially castellated for the opening of the Games, sucked in tirelessly the variegated crowd and pumped it out again into the various sections of seats surrounding the wide green field. The journalists had predicted a great day. "I've been reading up all about the opening ceremonies," wrote one, "and as far as I can gather, Saturday afternoon is going to be the biggest noise that we've had

since we gave up rightly struggling to be free. The opening hour will be heralded by a salvo of artillery that will be heard as far as Belleek, and perhaps send the people up there to cover. Then all the ships will blow their sirens, and the locomotives and police will blow their whistles, and the motor cars will break all traditions and blow their horns. . . . Massed bands will play, 'A nation once again,' according to habit, after which one or two of our Presidents will deliver a few well-chosen remarks. . . ."

Now I had got me an Official Press Pass from the Tailteann Committee, and on entering the gate, I noticed a large highly-segregated section marked Press. So I climbed up among the brotherhood, lit the genial pipe, and gazed like the rest with calm, eagle eye over the multitude. This if ever, was a journalistic day.

Within the inclosure, the colors of the Tailté—blue and gold—flamed out amidst the flags of those nations whose Irish foster-sons had returned to the homeland for the festive occasion. Aëroplanes soared and dove and made tail-spins through the empyrean, while in the grandstand, particularly in that section reserved for distinguished visitors, distinction ran very high; [although as far as beauty goes, here's to that dark-eyed little girl over there in the bleachers!] The voices of my confrères rose about me.

"There's J. J., the Director of the Games."

"Who's that stout one?"

"I dunno. He has the contour of an American."

"Who's that? John the Baptist?"

"No, it's Augustus John."

"There's the Governor-General."

"Where's President Cosgrave?"

"He was called to London."

Gradually the Distinguished took shape and form. There was Maharajah Jam Sahib of Nawanagar, looking like some one out of the Mahabharata; there was John McCormack, getting a greater ovation than the Governor-General; and eighty-two-year-old John Devoy, the Fenian leader, getting a greater ovation than McCormack. There was Prince Mirza Riza Kahn of Persia like some one out of Omar; and the novelist, Compton Mackenzie, very suave and elegant; and Padraic Colum, massive-browed, with lines of strength in his face, like one of the ancient Greeks he knows so well.

And there was J. J. Walsh, the Director of the Games, and the Governor-General, Tim Healy; and Sir Henry McLaughlin, and Sir John Lavery of the Royal Academy, with Lady Lavery. Above them rose the poet, William Butler Yeats, now Senator Yeats—tall, slightly stooping, calm, and entirely unimpressed—doing his full duty as chairman of the committee, yet attached to those about him by nothing more substantial than the infallible black cord of his eyeglasses.

Mr. de Valera, President of the Republic was not present.

9

Now to the barbaric shrieking of the pipes, the friendly snort of the tubas and the reverberation of the bass drums with their philosophical repetition of the syllable "Om," the contestants marched by in masses of yellow, white, orange and green, and took up their stations on the field. The Director, in absence of the Free State's President, said a few words of greeting, and the great chorus of six hundred voices sang an ode which ended with the smashing word of welcome, *Faillte*. Then the field was cleared with extraor-

dinary rapidity. Shinty, between Ireland and Scotland, was the order of the day.

Shinty is habitually played by Scotchmen, with curved sticks like hockey clubs. The Irish version of shinty is called hurling. Hurling is played with broader sticks and somewhat different rules—rules which on this occasion had been courteously modified to meet the game of the Scotch shinty men.¹ The object of both games is to drive a leather ball through the opposing team into a net goal.

Scotland ready? . . . Ireland ready? (Even sitting calmly among the press men, I felt that strange sinking sensation about the diaphragm which comes to players before the whistle blows.) Now they were off, racing down the field, and smashing at the ball with terrific clouts which ended with a snap that missed each other's anatomy by the merest fraction of an inch. It became clear at once that shinty must be derived from shin. If there is one place more than another on which the player is exposed to punishment, it is on that tender strip of his frame where nature, through some outrageous mistake in specifications, has placed the thin sharp edge of a bone to the front.

There in the hottest of the scrimmage was the captain of Scotland's team—the Irish lad I had met at Tipperary—hitting the ball resounding smashes, which, if they had come in contact with a human brow, would certainly have changed its contour considerably. But thanks to clean sportsmanlike play, mishaps were always avoided.

It is not within the province of this book to describe the

¹How much the Irish team was handicapped was realized by those who saw the fast hurling match the following day between the United States and Ireland in which the latter was victor in a clean, well-played contest.

game, play by play. But it is within the province of this book to report that at the end of the contest when the palm had been awarded to the Scotch team with hospitable and generous applause, and when the great Gaelic crowd surged out through the castellated gates and back into the unswept city, it was evident to a stranger who was trying to look at Gaelic affairs with an unbiased mind, that the opening of the Tailteann Games, at Dublin, in the year 1924, after a lapse of seven hundred and fifty-five years, was a success. And to that opinion I must hold.

THE CITY CELEBRATES

CHAPTER XVIII

1

IN the morning's papers, reports of the Games shared honors with news of the strike. The strike was now in full swing. "Dear, dirty Dublin," the papers wailed, "is becoming dearer and dirtier than ever." There had been no lights the night before. "Pickets" were guarding the dumping grounds and making people throw their rubbish into the street. The vegetable markets were knee deep in carrot tops and ancient cabbage . . .

The Government blamed the strikers for striking at his time of national celebration. The strikers blamed the Government for forcing an issue which made them strike. A large crowd had gathered before the empty shell of what had once been the General Post Office, upon which the strikers had pasted a sign. It read as follows:

"The Public will not be misled by a specious appeal to the 'National Welfare' when the essence of such an appeal is the reduction in the standard of living of those who form the majority of the people of the working class.

"To the visitors on our shores *we express our regrets*, but the onus of responsibility is not on the shoulders of the workers but of the government. The workers' representatives have made the perfectly fair offer to the government that the matter of reducing municipal workers' wages be postponed to March 31st next, this being the period covered by current estimates."

But now the crowd about me had turned squarely around and was looking upward with much delight toward the platform near the top of the Nelson Pillar where an excessively stout gentleman visitor—absorbed in who knows what paradoxes or poetic fancies—stood resting in his generous circumference on the railing and gazing lightly out over the city.

I looked about me up and down O'Connell Street, and as I looked, Dublin—forgetting the strike, the Games, the price of 'cabbage, and the price of liberty—raised to that exalted rotundity one vast, appreciative grin.

2

The vegetable market was not as bad as the papers had said. At most, the rubbish did not reach the shoe tops. Shabbily dressed pickets guarded the stalls so that the impedimenta might not be removed by private or public carts. On the whole, I liked the faces of the men. They were rough but not tough.

"They've reduced us nine shillin's a week already," said one, "and they want to reduce us three times more, at two shillin's a go. A man can't live . . . We ain't agitators, you understand. I asked one of them bloody agitators where he came from and he said, 'From Australia,' and I said to him, 'What are you agitating here for?' 'B'God,' says he, 'because I couldn't agitate in Australia' . . . We ain't like that. We're only men needin' a livin' wage."

"Do you go armed?" I inquired of another.

"No *sir!*" he replied. "We're through with that. You put a bloody rifle in an Irishman's hands and he doesn't care what he shoots, whether it's men or pigeons—so long as he shoots."

"I've been in the west for two months," I said, "but I haven't seen any shooting yet."

"Have you been to Dingle?" one of the group asked drawing nearer.

"Have you been to Limerick?" asked another eagerly.

"Have you been to Macroon? That's a busy place for a small place."

"Have you been to Cramore?" inquired a solemn-eyed little man with a sly glance at his mates. "That's a busy place too. They skin asses there."

"No," I said, "I'll keep away from that place!"

Their appreciation went up in a roar. They had friendliness and a rough humor in spite of their trouble. And now they told me that they were getting only three shillings sixpence a day, and that a man alone, to say nothing of a man with a wife and children had hard work to live on that. Three shillings and sixpence, one of them volunteered, was about eighty-three cents.

If I wanted to see some excitement, I ought to go down to Eden Quay. There was to be a march of the unemployed—thousands of them going along barefooted . . .

I walked to the quay along the Liffey but found no such march as they had predicted—only two hundred hungry-looking men stepping briskly along in well-formed squads and followed by one or two members of the metropolitan police.

But here was my Republican friend from Tralee, and here was the tram to take us to Countess Markeivicz.

Countess Constance de Markeivicz was sitting quietly at her table in a small sunlit room, putting color on an

illuminated Gaelic manuscript. I do not know what I had expected her to be doing, but there came a very definite sense of surprise at seeing her sitting quietly.

It is possible that some members of an old Cromwellian family in County Sligo from which she has long since cut adrift would be surprised at seeing her sitting quietly. Her lads of the Fianna which she organized, and of which she was so actively the leader would probably not visualize her as sitting quietly, either. While to the Governor-General, and the President of the Free State, and to several members of the Dáil, the thought of Countess Markeivicz sitting quietly would come, no doubt, not only as a surprise but as a soothing balm.

Her quietude might also take by surprise the English officers who had opposed her during the Easter Week Rebellion of 1916 when she commanded such of the Irish forces as occupied the Royal College of Surgeons in St. Stephen's Green—a position which she would certainly have defended to the death, had not the order come from the Irish headquarters for a general surrender. There is rather a nice incident connected with that final scene.

The Countess, in the complete green uniform of the Irish Volunteers, stepped down out of the shattered doorway followed by an orderly carrying a white flag, and by some sixty of the defenders whose wounds would permit them to advance on foot. The lady reached the English line, took off her bandolier and sword, kissed them, and in a very touching manner handed them over to the young officer in charge.

Later, she and de Valera and others were sentenced by court martial to be shot, but at the last moment the sentence was commuted to imprisonment for life. In the general

amnesty between Ireland and England, she was set free, only to be rearrested again and again during the later troubles.

If the quiet lady at her illuminating is not the mother of Republicanism in Ireland, she is at least the militant elder sister. When Collins and Griffith signed the documents which led to the Free State, she threw her lot with de Valera and the Republic, going into that nightmare of ambush, attack, and escape known as the Republican trouble, during which there were many moments when she would have been killed at sight.

She greeted us pleasantly and gave us each a Russian cigarette which we consumed with relish.

I inquired after the Fianna, that organization of the youth of Ireland which she had long since established, and which had played so great a part in the Republican trouble, asking whether it was in any way affiliated with the Scouts. It was not, she said. They were so little akin, in fact, that when some of the English Scouts came to Dublin, the Fianna had pummelled them right merrily.

"You don't care much for England?"

"Certainly I care for England! I found refuge from the English themselves in England! I was there for months in all sorts of places and disguises. Once when they were very hot on my trail, a little girl wheeled me away in a wheel chair as her invalid granny. But one always had to change one's name, and was forgetting who one was at the moment. Great bore!

"*They* have an aristocracy, at least, which is more than we can say in Ireland. No aristocracy here except families which came in and evicted others—like mine . . . A strange country, Ireland . . . Marx may be right, but Ire-

land seems to be an exception to every rule . . . People call me red, pink, Bolshevik," she added. "The truth is, I'm only Gaelic."

I asked how she first became interested in political affairs. She replied that she had been brought up without knowing a line of history (or anything else for that matter), but that she had rented a house in the mountains near a young poet and had got interested in his books. Then she made friends with James Connolly and started in seriously to learn. With her mind keyed to decentralization of corporations and a coöperative ideal, she began to organize the Fianna.

"Mr. Russell of *The Irish Statesman* has a coöperative ideal too."

"'A. E.'? When he had his chance to choose between the Free State and the Republic, he jumped the wrong way. I said to him, 'George—you're an idiot!'"

The idea of any one calling Mr. George Russell of all Ireland an idiot struck me as a matter of some mirth. "George?" I asked.

"Certainly *George!*" she said. "I've known him for years! I was the first person who made him exhibit his paintings. People said, 'You'll ruin yourself with that rank amateur.' But I said, 'There's a genius, and nobody knows it . . .' He'll tell you that himself. But he's gone over completely to the Free State. People will see sooner or later that the Free State is bringing in the British system. It's very hard for us to predict what will happen. Very. But it is the deepest treachery that hoists a Home Rule flag over the Twenty-six Counties." She continued to berate the Free State, not, I thought, with perfect fairness (which procedure under the circumstances was entirely

human) until I asked a little desperately, "Madame, don't you give the Free State leaders credit for a single altruistic motive?"

"Yes, there were one or two men . . . They thought the Treaty was a halfway house . . . But it isn't."

"In spite of these disagreements," I said, "I think that you will very shortly have a wonderful country—if there is no more fighting."

She went on for a time with her work, then held up the illuminated manuscript she was painting.

"It is all like one of these old Gaelic knots without an end to it . . . No, there's *one* end to it. The church has always been in favor of the rich."

I was silent, remembering the ravaged abbeys of Ireland. Had they been ravaged by the *poor*?

But now Countess Markevicz, rising, added a sentence which gave our departure a cheering touch of levity.

"Ireland," she said, "will never be great if we entirely give up the idea of fighting."

4

It seemed strange to go from Countess Markevicz directly to the Abbey Theatre to see William Butler Yeats' *Cathleen ni Houlihan*—strange, because if ever there was a play with revolution at its soul, it is that play; yet Mr. Yeats had become Senator Yeats in the Dáil of the Free State, causing such revolutionary spirits as the Countess to think of him as a reactionary. And they would continue to think of him as a reactionary until such time as they themselves might gain the power of government, and then they too would shortly be considered reactionary; for that

is the way with revolution, whether the leader is Robespierre in France, or Lenin in Russia or Diaz in Mexico or Washington in the United States.

The Abbey is a small theater with a quality of quaintness which is its own. I arrived early and browsed around in the black, red and gold foyer where there are many matters of interest. Here is a small signed etching of Synge by Jack Yeats; a design for *The King's Threshold* by Gordon Craig; the censor's note on the initial production of *The Playboy of the Western World*; a poster for the Paris première of the same play in 1913 bearing the outrageous title, LE BALADIN DU MONDE OCCIDENTAL.

On coming into the auditorium, one is surprised by the intimate proportions of the Abbey. Physically, it is a "little theater"—the parent of most other little theaters. The walls are dull-red with simple panels in black, white and gold. Across the proscenium arch run a few straight black and gold bands. There is a floriated cast-iron railing around the balcony, in black and gold. The red, leather-covered seats are more like the seats in a concert hall than in a theater.

These decorations give a strange and pleasing sense of restraint and cohesion, based principally on agreement of style, and simplicity. The orchestra too, is measured by quality, not bulk. It consists of three artists who play Mozart, Bizet, Rimsky-Korsakov, Händel, and Mascagni in such a way that the composers would not fail to recognize their work; and that, in this day of trombonian "smears" and saxophonic chuckles is something of a relief.

On the program beneath the characters in the play was a footnote by Mr. Yeats in that beautiful English which is so typically of Ireland, saying that one night he had had a dream "almost as clear as a vision, of a cottage where there

was well-being and fire-light and talk of marriage, and into the midst of that cottage there came an old woman. She was Ireland herself, that Cathleen ni Houlihan for whom so many songs have been sung, and for whose sake so many have gone to their death. I thought," Mr. Yeats continues, "that if I could write this out as a little play, I could make others see my dream as I had seen it."¹

And how well he has made others see it! Because of *Cathleen ni Houlihan*, how many men have gladly gone out to their death! It is a slight story of an old woman passing through a cottage and drawing away a lad who was about to be married, to a richer, more exalted love—out there. It is a simply-woven play, not acted by actors, but—what is more—played by players, with the utter spontaneous simplicity of the Abbey school.

When Sara Allgood—who plays Cathleen better than any one else in the world—pronounced her final, stirring lines, I knew in my heart that if I had been Irish at that time—*by God*—I would have been out there too . . . But when the lights went up, a young man and woman near by were looking curiously at my face; and when we talked together, they were surprised that a foreigner should have been moved by the play. For though they were Irish themselves it had given them no particular emotion at all.

As I walked through the darkness to my hotel, I remembered how once in the Judean wilderness, I had met a monk who had been tremendously stirred by the ancient writings of the 4th Century patriarch, St. Chrysostom, because they were the first religious messages he had known.

¹ Augustine Birrell, Home Secretary for Ireland, wrote of the Abbey that "it was a propaganda center of most formidable significance." Thomas MacDonagh and Joseph Plunkett, of the Abbey circle, were executed as leaders of the 1916 Rebellion.

But to me they carried no message at all because at the time I was over-familiar with printed religions of a more recent sort.

So it was here. These young people being fed up on revolutions found no spark in Mr. Yeats' play, but to me it flamed out with a new-awakening flame. In a breath I understood the Irish Volunteers of Easter Week and the vast burned shells of the Post Office and Customs House and the Four Courts; and the burned barracks and blown up bridges of the later time. And I thought of Mr. de Valera, and the lads who smashed the bridges and put "Up Republic" on the walls; and the senators of the Dáil, and the priests I had met; and little Billy Whelan in Tralee.

Irishmen all—in a country where the rain and the sun and the ocean currents and the sod produce a fertility which may be found in few other lands in the western world. And here for the first time in seven hundred years was a freedom which was very close to freedom, and a peace which was very close to peace. If some stranger whom they could believe and trust would only come along now, I thought as I walked on, and smash home the fact that what the Ireland of today needs more than any theoretical thing in the world, is *to build* . . .

Ah, but he'd have to be a strong man! Strong with his mind and perhaps strong with his fists. I knew no such man as that . . . It was a problem, this. ". . . like one of these old Gaelic knots . . ."

With bowed head I strode along through the darkness of unlighted Dublin, pondering profoundly. What conclusion might one draw?

Crash!

Only this conclusion. That the lamp posts of Dublin are very, *very* hard indeed.

PEGGY

CHAPTER XIX

1

THAT certain unofficial remarks from the suddenly illuminated area about the lamp post had any far-reaching influence, is of course unthinkable.

Nevertheless, let it be reported and at once written down in flaming gold just below the name of Abou Ben Adhem (who heads the honor roll¹) that *the Dublin strike was settled in three days*, both parties conceding somewhat to the common welfare—this to the lasting credit of all concerned.

2

The athletic contests continued, and the gymnastics, and the singing and the traditional playing of the violin, and the art and textile exhibitions, finally merging with and dissolving into the Dublin Horse Show.

Between times there were parks to be seen, and galleries and slums and theaters and churches. But a week is a long time in which to avoid making acquaintances in any city, a long and lonely time.

On the last afternoon of the Games, I went a little desperately into a cinema, climbed over a row of darkling people, and sat down. After a while, a young woman came

¹ A friend named Anderson explained to me recently, that Abou Ben Adhem's name comes first on the list because the list is alphabetical.

in and sat down beside me. It was early in the performance; the leading picture, *Trilby*, had not yet been shown. When the lights went up following the "events of the week," I looked at my neighbor and saw that she was tall and dark-haired, with a very charming, delicate profile and a pointed chin. When I glanced at her again on some flimsy pretext or other, I saw that she was even handsomer than I had thought before.

"Now here is a pretty girl," I thought, "the prettiest girl I've seen since I swore that great villainous, hairy-chested oath at the tunnel between Cork and Kerry some two months ago. Doing my duty by that oath would not only be a duty but a pleasure. . . . However, I don't even know her."

As we sat there looking at Taffy and the Laird and Little Billee, it chanced that her elbow came over beyond my side of that neutral and terrible division between the seats which is neither an aid nor a barrier, and rested lightly but confidently against my arm.

Now very often in books—even in books which are written and read today—you will find that the lone gentleman in such a predicament, being a high and noble creature, will immediately and unhesitatingly dislocate his shoulder-blade or crack a few vertebræ in a frantic effort to make way for the lovely young lady's elbow. Ah yes . . . But life isn't always like that. Life is more complex. Sometimes, on such an occasion, there swing into the not-too-besotted masculine consciousness whole regiments of complexes—strange, furtive, tender . . . Inhibitions . . . Also a ridiculous, maudlin thing about being a noble protector . . . And, of course, the time-worn question, "Did she do that on purpose?"

As for removing one's own arm—no! If her elbow is

jabbing you unintentionally, why humiliate her by sliding out from under? If it *is* intentional, better leave your arm where it is too. Hell knows no fury like a scorned woman.

Another jab of the elbow! That *is* intended! No, perhaps not after all. On the screen Little Billee is saying good-by to Trilby. That jab may have been only a reflex of Trilby's farewell. Trilby goes away and the elbow is withdrawn leaving you in dreary solitude. However a humorous incident comes along and you laugh, and your neighbor laughs, and the atmosphere becomes very neighborly indeed, since both of you have such a good sense of humor.

Now the smug, stodgy cleric who is Billee's father, is refusing Trilby as a daughter-in-law, and, hardly knowing yourself in your brazen temerity, you say to your neighbor, "He's a terrible little beast, isn't he?"

"Pardon me?"

You repeat your remark, trying to put into your voice such merriness as has not suffered immediate death by freezing.

"Indeed he is," she answers coolly.

3

But gradually you do talk together, and at last, because it is something more to talk about, you tell her that you have been walking from Cork to Sligo via Galway.

"Walking!"

"Yes, all the way."

"Did you go to Galway city?"

"Yes, I spent several days there."

"I know some one in Galway," she says. "That is just the place I want to find out about."

But your other neighbors are getting a little restive. They came to see *Trilby*, not to hear about Galway. So you say, "Can't you come with me to tea somewhere? I'll tell you what I know about it."

"Oh! That would be a terribly unconventional thing to do."

The unconventional has its attractions, however; so after some further persuasion on your part, you find yourself in a pleasant restaurant called Clery's sitting across from a tall, dark, slight girl with fine, smiling eyes, a rather pale face, no rouge, no lip stick, but a high lovely forehead and very white teeth—altogether as charming a young woman as you have seen in Ireland.

As you talk to her and watch her pour your tea, you are aware more than ever that she is a nice girl and that you will have to break your oath about kissing her because she would certainly be distressed by it. She talks to you about Galway, and when you hear that it is a girl she knows there, not a man, you are glad;—why, Heaven only knows—but you are glad anyway.

And now, to your interested but tactful prompting, she tells you how she spends her days—a series of the most unlikely stories for one so fragile and feminine—about traveling in the north for a firm which sells *electrical supplies*, about a guardian in the south, about being alone in Dublin on business for the day (which, by the way is a holiday), about living at a summering place near Howth, a few stations away from Dublin by the train.

While she is talking, the shadow of a doubt crosses your mind. Her stories are so astonishing. She, so entirely feminine, to be traveling for an electrical house!

As tea is over, you ask what there is to do in Dublin, but

she suggests that you go with her to her suburb on the sea. Eventually, you go.

4

So here is the street of the little seaside town, and at the foot of the street an arched doorway between two houses; and beyond the doorway, another group of small stone houses topping some rugged cliffs. Out beyond is the island of Howth, where Erskine Childers in the *Asgard* ran guns for the Republic. The next house to the right on a higher cliff is that of a professor with whom Mr. de Valera sometimes stays. To the left, beyond other cliffs, rise the high walls of a convent.

A young woman with bobbed hair is sitting on a rock at the edge of the sea dabbling her feet in the water and laughing with several children who play about her.

"That is my sister," says the girl beside you, and there comes over you a sort of relief to see everything just as she had told you. And—because of the doubt which had passed through your mind in the city—a sort of shame.

The girl on the rock looks up and calls with a laugh, "Oh Peggy, don't come down here!" But the dark girl says to you "Come on," and down you go to meet the sister whose name is Eileen. After you have talked together, Eileen, who has been studying you intently says, "Oh, isn't he nice!" just as though you were a tame rabbit. Then, before you have recovered, she goes skipping away, saying, "Don't look at me, for I have two red spots on my ankles from hitting them together."

"Nice ankles the old thing's got," remarks Peggy.

In a moment Eileen is back again, fully dressed, and sits

down on the rock beside you. After some further moments of conversation, the astonishing young lady again bursts out, "After all, there are some lovely men in the world I haven't met. . . . I don't believe I'll think seriously about Cecil. . . ."

"You may not get a chance to," announces Peggy.

"If I stay here much longer—" sighs the other.

"Oh get along! he's mine," says Peggy.

5

So you sit on a patch of grass above the cliff with her, talking about a number of things. And after a while, in some unaccountable way—at least you would never in the world be able to account for it to some people—you find yourself holding her hand. You wonder whether she is coming to the United States ever, but the possibility of it seems small, because she is one of *only five people* whom you have met in Ireland who has no relatives in America!

"Of course, I'd like to get away," she says.

"Why? You have your position here—a good one. You travel about . . ."

"It is some of the men I have to meet in business. I have to listen to them. Of course, if they ever really *say* anything, I don't have anything to do with them, even if I don't get their orders."

You are silent for a time, and then you ask, "Do you tell the people you are working for why you lose their orders?"

"No," she answers a little wistfully. "There isn't any use in that."

"This is a fine girl," you think to yourself. She has won your admiration and respect. Remembering again the

doubt which crossed your mind a little earlier in the day, you sit there silent and a little abashed.

"Men are . . . men," she ponders.

"I know," you say. "I'm darned sorry we're that way—but that's the way we are."

Now it is she who is silent. Her attention has turned to you. She is looking out of her clear woman's eyes gently and sympathetically at you. No doubt—since you feel a little distressed—this is exactly what you have wished.

"You're a tender man, aren't you? . . . But you hold a girl's hand as though you did it often."

"Well—you are the first girl whose hand I have held in Ireland," you say (remembering, however, that your miserable life has extended considerably further back into the murky past than that).

6

And now it is time to be returning to Dublin. She walks with you to the gate. Stars are beginning to powder the sky. There are lights on the island of Howth standing out so black and formidable across the black channel. You begin to tell her how much you have enjoyed the day, but she stops you, saying, "It is good that you are going away now. Soon I would be liking you too much, and that only means a sort of pain . . ."

Then, raising her dark, lovely face, she gives you that which is neither cheaply given nor indifferently taken; and you go up the lane with a silence on your lips, and in your heart a memory.

THREE MEN & DONEGAL

CHAPTER XX

1

As Grania and I traveled northward out of Sligo town, it was plain that spring, which so recently accompanied us, had now long since passed on into Donegal. The fragrant, trailing garments of midsummer, sweeping slowly and majestically across the land, had (with the help of man) rolled the green clover into long, sweet-smelling windrows and gathered it into mounds of strongly scented hay.

Now over the hills and valleys lay stillness and a faint blue haze. Bees drowsed lazily through the quiet heat and, like decadent Romans on the third day of a feast, investigated more by habit than by intent the western roses upon hedge and cottage wall.

To the right of the road towered a vast sugar-loaf of a mountain. Along the edges of its flat top were vertical erosions like the rope marks of a giants' well. Far to the left, beyond a wide vista of groves and fields, the sea reached caressing fingers into the heart of the land.

Directly before us, the road ran over a low hill. An ancient shattered gateway of stone stood on the hill's crest framing against the blue sky a large cluster of yellow daisies of which the centers as well as the petals were a deep yellow. As we drew nearer, an amazingly rich blue of distant mountains rose behind the daisies; and then at the foot of the mountains shone the rare blue of water—so tender, so compelling, so unbelievable, that it would not be good for

a man to stand there too long and look through the gateway. Here was the throbbing, sensual beauty of Keats, and of certain of the Schumann *lieder*, and of those poems of Ronsard which no man's art has yet translated into the English, because English words are hardly gentle enough to carry them without injury.

Of all the western bays which I had seen—Bantry, Dingle, Tralee, Clare, and Sligo—none had approached in color this first glimpse of the Bay of Donegal. Neither had I ever seen such tones of blue in sky and hills and sea off the American coast, east or west, nor off the China coast, nor off the Egyptian or Italian coasts. If those transcendent tones were to be compared, one must arrange to transport the cliffs of Malta to Donegal on the lap of a perfect Mediterranean day. Blue against the gray of a willow; blue against the gold of a wheat field; blue against a mass of yellow daisies or the orange berries of mountain ash. Blue seen for a moment between thatched roofs or the patterned trunks of white birch trees. What had these things to do with that grim armored car of the Free State or that lorryful of soldiers which came thundering along the highway?

2

North of Sligo there is a noticeable infiltration of northern names, that is, of names which one does not readily think of as Irish. Here were to be found Lanes and Bells and Langs and Alexanders peppered among the O'Donnells and McHughs and O'Kellys and O'Briens. And here was time enough (and villages enough) in which to observe this transition, for between Sligo and Bundoran the highway swept along the bay's edge in a great curve of twenty-four miles.

"Is there a hotel at Bundoran?" I asked a fellow wayfarer.

"Sure that's all it is—hotels," he said.

Bundoran is an attractive summering place of modest pretensions on the south side of Donegal Bay. A straggling street of hotels, inns and boarding houses runs along the coast above an expanse of flat, water-washed rocks and velvet-black seaweed which at high tide is hidden by the surf. There is a promenade with traveling peep-shows and puppet shows, and "Wild Bill's Roman Circus," and the "Pierrot Singers." There is a long, stationary motorbus de luxe, with sets of wireless "head 'phones" at each of the seats and antennæ strung overhead—the idea being that those who have never heard via wireless before may sit comfortably in rows listening to concerts in Belfast or Dublin or Paris or Berlin.

But after all, Bundoran is more cosmopolitan than Irish, for its prototypes may be found in any civilized country under the sun. Sweet Grania, if you are so inclined, let us stagger on to Donegal, for the sound of the name, Donegal, beyond the shadow of a doubt, is Irish.

3

In Donegal I met three men.

Sam Beresford—the famous, you might say—was a small, pleasant, quiet, dapper, gray-haired man. He wore rather modish clothes for Donegal town, and ran a small hotel on the "Diamond." He would have passed me silently by—allowed himself to bloom unseen, as it were,—if, when he brought in the bacon and eggs, he had not exposed to my fascinated eye an inch of magnificent Javanese tattooing on his right wrist.

It was only then that I found he had been a showman and a dancer, and had danced his way over the entire world. He began dancing in public when he was ten. He danced in New York at fourteen. London? He danced there on a ten foot column with a marble top. St. Simon Stylites gone mad!

He showed me a pair of silvered wooden clogs made for him in India, with iron runners along the soles. He had given entertainments in Australia, Sumatra, the Straits, Dutch Delhi, Manila, Hongkong, Ceylon, and Burmah. He had danced for the Sultan of Joerpore at his palace fourteen miles from Singapore. He had played sixty stations in Java from Batavia to Surabaya.

He had opened the Jubilee Hall in Rangoon—"if you should happen to get there." He had worked the Mediterranean too—Egypt, Malta, "Alex," Port Said, Cairo, Tangier, giving his dances and impersonations. He had met a cinema chap in the Thursday Islands, where the Japanese pearl fishers come in. They joined up and went on together with their two talents and an old drum with one end knocked out.

He showed me a poster of his show. "Not a dull moment from start to finish," it read. One could believe it. During the Great War, he was the only entertainer allowed in the forts in many parts in Ireland. In a "go-down" beside the hotel, he had a case with testimonials in it from one hundred and eighty-seven military commanders.

"I'll put you in a book, Mr. Beresford," I said.

He smiled a quaint, quiet smile. "There'll be lots of people in the world who'll wonder and who'll remark, "So that old feller has settled down in Donegal!"

He was Sam Beresford—the famous, you might say.

4

When I met Mr. Willie Begg in Sam Beresford's hotel, he was as pleasantly illuminated as the Book of Kells—not blatantly nor crassly, but lightly and with finesse, after the best Celtic tradition. One of the happiest times to distinguish a true gentleman is when he is a little illumined. A true gentleman will think pleasantly about his ancestors, whereas one who is not a true gentleman will think unpleasantly about his descendants. Mr. Willie Begg thought about his ancestors.

"Begg . . . Ah yes. Do you know the town of Killybegs on the Donegal coast? You can remember my name by it. Killybegs, Williebegs . . . It may interest you to know that I am a descendant of the firm which owned all this land some six centuries ago. Killybegs, Williebegs . . . The name Begg remains the same, you see. Another, all around, Sam."

For some reason or other, I do not remember whether Mr. Willie Begg owned a boot shop and had trouble with his stomach, or owned a druggist's shop and had trouble with his feet. At least, I know that he talked at vast length about internal difficulties and attacks and about "breaking up"—the only cure for which, he assured me, was Irish whiskey, copiously administered.

At any rate, he knew a surprising lot about medicine. During the Great War—unless I err frightfully—he had had charge of a base hospital in the south of Ireland, and had done work for which many a man would have received citations. It may well be that Willie Begg himself received a citation. On that point too, I am a little cloudy.

It was during the influenza epidemic that he had had

charge of the hospital. It had been terrible. I asked him, morbidly, about his worst case.

"My worst case was a man from Cork who had never taken a sober breath in his life—a little old wreck of a man named Doherty with a constant half inch of stubble on his chin and a nose resplendent. When they brought him in he had chronic asthma and influenza. After he had been in the hospital one day, he developed double septic pneumonia. Terrible case! Oh terrible! I have never seen a man who was so sick and still conscious. I got cylinders of oxygen. I got bags for his head. I got doctors from everywhere. No good. He was done.

"I went down and dissolved an eighth of a grain of strychnine in water and shot it into the heart muscles so he would last while I got a priest. There was a pint of magnificent old brandy in the office for medicinal purposes. I brought it up and offered him a drink but he refused it. That's how sick he was. I put it on a shelf and went for the priest.

" 'Poor boy,' said the Father, 'he's at his end.' But for some reason, when I returned with the priest, Doherty was a little more lively than when I left.

" 'What ails me then, Father?' he asked.

" 'It's three score and ten that ails ye, Michael,' said the priest.

" 'And do you think I'll be finding death now?'

" 'Aye, Michael.'

" 'Well, I wouldn't care to be taking the Sacrament anyway. It would be like giving death an invitation.'

" 'But you've settled up your affairs, haven't you, Michael?'

" 'Yes, Father, my affairs are settled up.'

" 'Then why won't you settle your Heavenly affairs too?'

"Well, if you say so, I'll do it. But it will be bitter lonely up there.'

"What makes you think so, Michael?"

"Well, I've always lived with me friends in Cork. When I die, how do I know? God may put me amongst a lot of black strangers.'

"But at last the priest prevailed on him to take the Sacrament, and went away. Doherty went to sleep. A few hours later I remembered the brandy for medicinal purposes and went over to the shelf twenty paces from the bed to get it. *Empty!* Five shillings a glass, fifty shillings a bottle! *What fiend . . .* I returned to the bed and leaned over Michael Doherty. Brandy!

"He woke up six hours after, fairly tight—but better! The crisis had passed. 'Tell me,' I said to him later, 'what happened when I went out to get the Father.'

"Well,' said he, 'I knew I was going to die. I knew it. So I said to myself, "Bedad, I'll have just one last drink."'

"Five weeks later he walked out of the hospital!"

I looked at Willie Begs. He looked at me.

"Another, all around, Sam," he said.

5

It was in his watchmaker's and general merchandise shop that I met Mr. John Henderson, J.P. (Justice of the Peace) of Donegal. He was tall, gentle, white-haired, courteous without being over-courtlly, and he looked at one out of kindly blue eyes over glasses which gripped the middle of a somewhat aquiline nose and made wrinkles on its sides. We talked about the old castle in the town and the ancient abbey just outside where that famous chronicle of Irish history called *The Annals of the Four Masters* was written.

Little remains of the abbey now except a few broken walls, some graves, and some cypresses above a narrow arm of the sea.

The Annals were written by four Franciscan monks, who, returning to the monastery in 1632 after it had been destroyed in civil war, built themselves huts amid the ruins and wrote their invaluable chronicle of Ireland during the four and a half years that followed—a book which carries Irish history back to the year 2884 B. C.

The first mention of Donegal itself was in the account of a great wedding of the 9th Century, when Aernaghan, father of Donal (forefather of all the O'Donnells) was chieftain at the time of the coming of the Danes. In order to cement the friendship between his clan and the newcomers, he gave his three beautiful daughters to three Danish princes.

Little more is told about Donegal until the 12th Century when the O'Donnells built their first castle, only to raze it to the ground themselves during the latter part of Elizabeth's reign to prevent it from falling into English hands. The present O'Donnell castle which is now to be seen in the town was rebuilt by Sir Basil Brook who was allowed £400 by the English government for repairs. The Brooks remained loyalists in Cromwell's time, so that gentleman sent a detachment to Donegal and dismantled their stronghold.

As I talked to Mr. Henderson, another man of the town came in and stood beside us. "If you wanted to get the facts," he said to me at last, "you couldn't get them better from any one in all Donegal. Himself is well known as a writer in these parts, and as a poet."

So there was nothing for it but that the old man (under some gentle protest, but proudly, for all that) should get out his book of neatly kept cuttings from the *Belfast Eve-*

ning Post and the *Londonderry Sentinel* and the *Derry Journal*. He had published a volume of verse too, he said, in an edition of five hundred which cost him £30, and he had sold all the copies, not even keeping one for himself, after the manner of poets.

One of the reviews quoted his own preface. "This is a land of differences," it said, "and there is nothing Irish that the Irish won't differ on, especially if there be religion or politics in it." As I went on reading, he busied himself among his letters, not tremulously, nor fussily, but with a balanced calmness and tranquillity which it was good to see in old age. A little boy entered the shop and asked whether he had any harmonicas.

"Yes, dear, come in."

"Have you one for sixpence?"

"No. Those are a shilling."

"How much is that one?"

"That is eightpence."

"I'll take it."

"Right, dear."

A gentle, lovable old man!

"I wrote a historical thing called 'the Siege of Derry' in four parts," he said when the lad had gone, "and it appeared in the *Belfast Weekly News*. It was recited at a monster Orange meeting in Toronto, and the Grand Master of Orangemen of Western Canada wrote to Sir James Henderson of the *Belfast Weekly News* to see if he could find the author. Then I sent Sir James a copy of my book, *The Wanderer's Dream*, which contained all those poems; and presently the Royal Society of Antiquities of Ireland asked me to join their association. But what would I be doing," he said laughing shyly, "among a lot of knights and earls and all!"

"And you haven't a copy of the book yourself?"

"No. My last one went to the National Library in Wales. They have a right to demand a copy of every book that is written."

6

I wandered out of the shop and met a friendly priest who took me in the semi-darkness to see what might be seen of the castle; and upon returning to the hotel, I found that the other man who had been in the shop had found a copy of *The Wanderer's Dream*, and had left it for me to see.

Gentle, sentimental lines. A book of long ago and far away, where the skies were always blue, and white robes were white as snow, and hair was always golden, and things which must fade always faded like the rose. To read it was to be in little danger of coming up against the rough edge of any independent thought. To read it was like drifting in a golden boat across the surface of a lily pond, propelled by a balmy breeze . . . But suddenly, with a cracking and splintering of gilt, this line poked itself up through the bottom of the boat:

"Just a little time and the lovesick swain . . ."

I sat up and looked at the book's date. 1903.

Just'-a-little time' and the love'sick (bang) swain . . ."

The rhythm of tom-toms in that! I read the whole stanza.

"Just a little time and the lovesick swain
If he has a little patience, will be himself again,
And he'll soon learn to laugh at the folly of his love
And he'll cast it aside like a worn-out glove . . ."

Rhythm! Primitive and virile! The rhythm of the Zambezi and of Broadway. I searched through the other five stanzas of that particular verse. I searched through the entire book. There were no more lines like it. The rest was mildly Victorian.

But—those four lines of ultra-modern jazz verse in the gentle long ago of 1903!

Mr. James Henderson of Donegal, Justice of the Peace, give an account of yourself!

TOWN OF THE TWENTY COWS

CHAPTER XXI

1

As the road from Donegal coiled into the mouth of Barnesmore Gap, we caught up with a red-headed Irish lad with a very lame leg who for several hours had been limping on ahead of us. He was on his way, he said, from Callooney south of Sligo where he had been haying, and was now headed for Londonderry—a walk of a hundred and fifty miles. He wanted to get to his people in Scotland where his father had a small unemployment pension. Four years earlier when he was fifteen, he had broken his hip, and lay in bed more than a year. I invited him aloft to the top of the cart.

“My mother and father drink,” he said, “and what with me lame and all, I think they sent me here to do for myself. I want to get back to my sister in Scotland, but I’ve only got a shillin’. I bought these shoes with the money I made haying, and these pants and this waistcoat—all second-hand. My coat isn’t very good. Some people call it a frock.” He displayed under his old mackintosh a few tatters of coat.

“When I buy second-hand clothes, I always wash them for you can never tell who was in them before ye.”

Now we were well into the Gap with no houses in sight for several miles. About us lay some of the most desolate rocks in Ireland. My fellow traveler looked around, apparently satisfying himself that no one was in sight. The road was empty.

"Do you carry American money or Irish?" he inquired.

"Irish," I said. He nonchalantly picked up my heavy stick which was lying on the cart and tried the weight of it. I continued walking quietly along at his side. A change came over his face. He raised the stick, and with a crashing blow of terrific force, *dashed out my brains all over the side of the cart!*

"Ezooks," he cried, wiping off the club, "not only ezooks but 'sblood, zounds, and 'ods bodkins!"

'High diddle diddle
The cat and the fiddle
The cow jumped over the moon,
The little dog laughed to see such sport—
For the pen has run off with the loon.

There, Grania! I'm back on the straight and narrow path again. No use looking around and snorting! Some time when *your* spirit is keyed to high adventure, *you* try writing a gentle, pastoral book like this one! And if you think that my momentary attack was a very bad one, Grania, listen to this, written back in the seventeen hundreds by an Irishman named Barrett:

"Conceive my horror when I beheld my chamber filled with banditti! Snatching my falchion, I flew to the armory for my coat of mail; the bravos rushed after me but I fought and dressed, dressed and fought . . . I stood alone, firm, dignified, collected, and only fifteen years of age. . . . To describe the horror of what followed were beyond the pen of an Anacreon. In short, I fought till my silver skin was laced with my golden blood, while the bullets flew round thick as hail,

"'And whistled as they went for want of thought . . .'

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"At length I murdered my way down to my little skiff, embarked in it, and arrived at this island. As I first touched foot to its chalky beach, 'Hail! happy land,' cried I, 'hail, thrice hail.'

"'We never have any hail here, sir,' said a little child running by . . ."

But to return to the lad with the red hair sitting in the cart. He looked, as I said, back along the road. No one was in sight. A change came over his face. He raised the stick and—brushed a fly off Grania's back. "It's wicked the way the flies do be bothering the animals this weather. It is enough to make them crooked in their temper."

Now we came down a slight hill at the edge of a town. If people had stared before, they stared twice as hard now to see a man in a whole suit of clothes walking beside a donkey cart, with a ragged lad sitting up aloft.

"I suppose it's many's the body you meet, many's the strange face you see along the road," he said. "It's a long weary way to Scotland too—when you've only got a shillin'."

"How much would it cost to get to Scotland?"

"Six shillin's and sixpence, just."

Would he ask me for help, I wondered? But he didn't, and when we parted, I did what I could to make his fiscal burden lighter.

2

The town was Balleybofey—Bally (town), bo (cow), fey (twenty)—the Town of the Twenty Cows. But I met only two of them and they were maids at the hotel—two of the stupidest, most heartless mortals in the world, who, in the

absence of the proprietor, were lording it over his domain.

My bags were taken in and it was said that I could have a room. But when I came back with the "boots" from stabling the donkey, these maids—with many contemptuous looks at my rough shoes and clothes, announced that there were no rooms (which I knew from the "boots" to be untrue), saying that I had better look for another place before it grew too dark.

To the best of my knowledge there were no other hotels in Ballybofey. They admitted as much but remained obdurate. I reasoned, I discussed, I pleaded, I exhorted—only to be met by a cold and haughty disdain which was by no means in keeping with certain uncouth shrieks of laughter I heard from time to time issuing from the kitchen.

Why bother with these people at all, you ask? They ought to be ignored. It isn't good form . . . Good form my great grandmother's tabbycat! Certainly I think that life is just as much a fine art as the next man; but after sixty nights on the road, one isn't bothering about good form.

At last I decided to make a test case of it. I decided to see at what point human stupidity would give way. I got out certain newspaper cuttings and pictures relative to my journey which had appeared in the well-disposed Irish press. With shame on my brow, but for the sake of the test, I showed them one of my earlier books.

"You cannot stay at this house," said the queenly creatures.

"But the first girl I saw took in my bags and said that I could have a room."

"She did very wrong."

"I've come all the way by road from Donegal today."

"You shall not have a room in this house tonight."

"When do you expect the proprietor?"

"He'll be here this evening."

But let us skip some of the sordid details. Three hours later I rang the bell in the stuffy little smoking room in which I had been waiting in a state of unpleasant humiliation.

"Let's put it this way," I said to the one who answered the bell. "You're an Irish girl, I'm an American man. America has been pretty good to some of the Irish people—made a home for them and taken care of them, and sometimes even helped them, over there. Won't you, not as some one out of a hotel, but as a girl of Ireland, do this for a man from America?"

"You cannot have a room here tonight." And then she added very haughtily something, which from her point of view proved to be a mistake. "The rooms in this hotel are reserved for bankers."

Bankers? *Bankers*? BANKERS? At that word, I heard the first vibrations of a violent explosion. The explosion was I. The more I exploded, the more she wilted. When the final tremors died away, I was in a very good bed.

There is a moral to this tale, but it is a bit depressing.

Let's start another chapter.

THE BORDER AND DERRY

CHAPTER XXII

1

THE country beyond Balleybofey is luxurious and productive. It is not greatly different from the fertile farmland which may be found in parts of Pennsylvania, Bulgaria, the Haute Marne, or in any other prosperous rolling country.

A few miles beyond Ballybofey lies the dorf of Castlefinn. A few miles beyond Castlefinn lies the Border.

The question of the Border is a long dark deep question. It has taken a bulldog grip of the Celtic historical imagination, which is a bad thing for any dispute. ("You settle a quarrel in Ireland," said Lloyd George, "and you find that it started with Brian Boru.")

At the time of Henry VIII, the adventurous souls who crossed the Irish channel to find themselves new lands were Catholics. But Cromwell coming in 1649, departed and left in his wake a general sprinkling of Protestant landlords over the best of Ireland. They were in the minority, of course, and frequent troubles evolved from the lack of balance.

James I, the Scot, to remedy this shortage of Protestants in at least one section of the country, poured numbers of his humbler countrymen into Ulster, thus fitting Protestant tenants to Protestant landlords, while those who were Catholic took to the hills which they cultivated as best they could, while the Protestants remained in the fertile valleys.

But these Presbyterian Scotch in Ulster were even more bitterly opposed to the Church of England than the Catholics were. For the most part it was they who opposed the Act of Union with England in 1800, while on the whole, it was supported by the Catholics, who looked forward to political rights which the Act promised.

But a few years later, the industrious and industrialized North, now more or less reconciled with the Episcopalians, and enjoying the benefits of free trade with Scotland and England, had become resigned to the Act of Union; while the Catholic South now realized that under the Union it could never become its own master.

From that time until the signing of the Treaty which made it a Free State (December 6, 1921), the South was in a state of intermittent ferment over the Union. When the Treaty was signed, attention very naturally focused on the Border between the Free State and Ulster. It is easy to understand how colonies of Protestants or of Catholics had grown up in various places along this tentative Border. When the line was drawn, many of these colonies found themselves on the wrong side of it. The dispute extended to whole counties which had a slight Protestant or Catholic majority.

It would be futile in this book to attempt to follow the Border intricacies beyond these large simple outlines. The Border has been like a dragon squatting between the Free State and Ulster, threatening to consume them both. It thrives on complexities. It has devoured any number of speeches, debates, conferences, and judicial committees. It has gulped down with equal unconcern all plans of settlement from those of Lord Northcliffe to those of Mr. John Devoy. Border raids make it wriggle with pleasure. The feet of members of Parliament who come to observe, only

tickle it as they run along its back. Mr. de Valera keeps climbing up and fastening the emblems of Republicanism to its ear which it tweaks with fiendish glee.

"Grania, my small crusader of the road, have you the courage to encounter this monster and pass over his kinky width into Ulster?"

She replies not at all. Her silence spells contempt. She fears neither men nor beasts; she fears nothing but a shortage of oats. We move cautiously forward along the highway.

2

I do not like frontiers between countries where there is "trouble." I happen in my life to have been on or about the frontiers of several countries when war was brewing, and I found it no more agreeable for the stranger without the gates than for the citizen within them. I remembered, as we plodded along the road, an unpleasant experience at Adrianople two weeks before the Turkish cavalry came pouring back over the Thracian highlands. I remembered a little rub in Montenegro when the citizens of Agram to the north were calling for "a republic with a good king." Remembering these things, I forgot to eat my lunch.

We came to a shack marked Customs. I stopped Grania and went in. "The customs inspection is three miles farther on at the bridge," said some one.

Another hour passed. Perhaps they wouldn't let us in! What if we were Suspicious Characters? What if Grania had hoof and mouth trouble and I had to go on with the cart alone! What if I had hoof and mouth trouble and Grania had to go on alone! It was raining again. I suddenly found myself very hungry. But one couldn't think

of lunching until the matter of the Border was settled.

At last—the bridge. I started to cross. Behind me came a sharp whistle. I halted Grania instantly, and looked around. It was a young man in the Customs uniform.

“Are you empty?” he called.

“*I am*,” I said.

“Go ahead then,” said he.

“Is this the way to Strabane?” I ventured.

“It is. Take the road to the left.” And he sauntered back to the place whence he came; while Grania with ears erect, and I with an orange in one hand and a pocket knife in the other, marched gayly over the bridge into Ulster.

3

At Strabane, I was put out of a second class hotel when the proprietor found that I was traveling with a donkey cart. I began to think that as one came north—no matter upon which side of the Border one happened to be—the lesser hotel keepers were lacking in the imagination of those of the South. After being refused quarters in this second class hotel, I sought out the best hotel in the town, where we were put up without question.

It was apparent that beyond the Border, several changes had occurred. One had only to listen to fragments of conversation in the hotel dining room.

“Bowling and batting were both rotten.”

“He tried to make a catch, and he split his hand, and it was bleeding.”

“Howe was to bat. Every time the ball hit the crease it made a hole in it.”

“He made twenty-two and two overs . . .”

And here was Lee & Perrins Sauce on the tables.

Butcher shops were called fleshers.

On posters one read, "Boys wanted for the Royal Navy."

The Union Jack waved everywhere.

Policemen carried pistols in their holsters.

I breakfasted with a captain of the northern police.

"I've just come over the Border from the South," I said.

"Ah yes. They call us the Black North down there," he replied a little whimsically. He was English, he said, but he had been twenty years in Ireland. Formerly he had been in the South, in the Royal Irish Constabulary, which was smashed and died fighting during the Sinn Fein trouble. "In spite of what the Irish have done," said he, "one can't help having a sneaking regard for them, although they did give the Constabulary a terrible time of it."

"Then you were in the South during the trouble?"

"Ah yes. My home's in the South too. I'll not go back though. They have long memories, the Irish, long memories. But England would have been there yet if it weren't for you."

"For us?"

"Yes—you in the United States. Public opinion in America was too strong."

"There are a great many Irish in America, of course."

"Yes, and Germans too. That made a difference. We ought to handle the Irish," he went on, "the way a man I know in Egypt says the Egyptians should be handled. Just make your laws and go right ahead. When the crowd mutters, don't pay any attention, but go right along as before, making your laws the way you want them and seeing that they are obeyed. Then a head will rise up out of the crowd. Don't pay any attention. Go right on as before."

But when that head gets high enough above the level of the crowd, *strike, and strike hard!*"

He went on calmly enough with his breakfast, but I went on not so calmly with mine. Here was a pronouncement of that savage, old-time colonial policy of blood and steel.

Involuntarily the thought of two other Englishmen came to my mind: Mr. H. G. Wells; Mr. Bertrand Russell.

4

If the North of Ireland believed that the United States, by favoring the southern separatists had added to Ulster's burden, there was no particular reason why any one in the North should be at all friendly to an American straying over the Ulster landscape—especially if he were a rather shabby tinker-looking fellow with a donkey. So when I took the road beyond Strabane, I prepared as philosophically as I could to meet a goodly number of rebuffs and possible animosities. The North, no doubt, from the standpoint of the North, had just and sufficient cause for coolness.

Busy with these thoughts, I came up the Londonderry road through an uneventful landscape to the village of Newbuildings. I went into a tiny grocery shop on the right and asked a rather thin, tired-looking woman at the counter if she had any apples. No, she had none.

"Have you some biscuits then?"

"No," she answered with an apologetic smile, "I have none of those either."

"Well," I said, "that's all right. I'll wait till I get to Derry," and I turned back to the cart.

"*Would you like a glass of milk?*"

"Why—thank you; yes."

"Come right in and sit down. I'll cut you some cake." And from her own very meager supply, she cut three goodly slices of pound cake and brought them to me with a glass of fresh milk.

"I suppose you're Irish," I said as I was leaving.

"Yes, don't I look it?" she asked with a laugh.

"May I ask what your name is?"

"My name," she said, "is *Stewart*."

In considerable bewilderment, I went down the road with my plans for receiving the coldness of the North all gone awry.

5

On a hill beside the widening expanse of the River Foyle rose the high city of Londonderry—"Derry" as the Ulstermen familiarly call it. Great crowds of people were to be seen crossing a long iron bridge over the river. Derry, indeed, was in the throes of a patriotic holiday which had brought trams and lorries and other motor vehicles in great number from the very ends of Ulster. The day was August 12th, and it was the two hundred and thirty-fifth anniversary of "the bursting of the boom."

The boom in question was a wood-and-cable barrier placed across the Foyle during a famous siege in 1689 by the forces of the Catholic James II and his French allies to prevent the relief of the Protestant town by an English fleet which lay some distance down the river.

The siege of Derry was probably as stirring an event of the kind as had ever occurred in the British Isles. When the governor of the city turned traitor and escaped to the enemy, command of the seven thousand able men within

the walls was intrusted to the Reverend George Walker—a fighting parson if there ever was one—and to Colonel Murray and Captain Baker. The siege continued for one hundred and five days, during the latter part of which the besieged suffered horribly from hunger.

Dogs, fattened on the unburied corpses, were eagerly sought for food. Cats, rats even, were caught and devoured. The streets and alleys became choked with the putrescent bodies of the dead, for the living were too weak to consider any menace save that of the enemy. Epidemics followed in which two thousand of the defenders died.

There was little left to eat but an occasional handful of grain and the salt hides of animals, which the garrison gnawed in a futile attempt to appease its hunger. Ammunition too was becoming so scarce that baked clay with a thin coating of metal took the place of round shot. The wall was breached time after time, but the gaps made during the day were repaired again at heroic cost during the night.

Finally the inactive fleet in the river's mouth received word from England that Derry must be relieved at all hazard. The merchant ships *Phoenix* and *Mountjoy* accompanied by the frigate *Dartmouth*, braved the enemy's fire, burst the boom and brought relief to the city.

The celebration of that event has continued to this day with so much fervor that when Grania and I arrived at the long bridge we found our way blocked by a great crowd and a cordon of police. From far down the waterside street rose the shrilling of the pipes and the zoom of the drums; and presently, along came a procession of rugged citizens of the Northern Counties who strode by, with purple ribbons about their necks and decorated banners in their hands, from Ballymoney, Ballymena, Ballyclare, Ballycarry and a bally lot more places than that, praising

a group of old-time youths known as the Thirteen Apprentice Boys of Derry. These lads, at the beginning of the great siege, had taken the matter of defense into their own hands and banged down the town portcullis almost against the nose of King James's noble henchman, the Earl of Antrim who was after slipping in at the ferry gate.

When the procession had passed, I found lodgings for Grania in the stable yard of an old man who had a hook instead of a hand.

"Verra well," he said. "Bring the wee horse in, lad. There'll be an empty stall, A'm sure. But will the wee horse go into a stall? Some of them won't, you know."

I assured him that Grania would go in fearlessly wherever oats were to be found—oats with a little crushed corn and bran.

"And do ye travel about all alone? There's a verra fine place atop the cart for a wife!" I told him that I already had troubles galore—whereupon he opened a huge Gothic mouth, laughed perfectly silently, and called after me to behave myself in the city.

"Wee horse." A good name, that! Grania for the South, Wee Horse for the North. I decided that the complete official title for Herself should be Grania, the Wee Horse.

THE NORTH

CHAPTER XXIII

1

WHEN James I decided to inject more Protestants into the north of Ireland, he sent a large number of Scotch and English adventurers to Derry, changed its name from Derry-Collumcille to Londonderry, and interested the great London guilds in the city.

"If stones could speake then Londons prayse shovld sovnd
Who bvilt this chvrch and cittie from the grovnd."

This inscription on the wall of Derry Cathedral refers to the fact that the building was completed in 1633, thanks to a fund of £4000 contributed by the city of London itself. Of the various old London companies, the mark of the drapers is still the strongest. Twenty thousand people in Derry are engaged in shirt-making. That fact makes me remember that the tails of Irish shirts are longer than those of American shirts. I do not know why, unless it is that Irish orators gesticulate more than American orators.

The ancient city wall of Derry forms a promenade a mile long around the hill on which the city is built. This wall, though complete, is hidden in places by buildings and streets which extend considerably outside of it.

But it is the old cathedral which is the diadem in Derry's coronet of stone. Browsing around in it, one may come quite suddenly on the banners taken from the French troops during sorties at the time of the siege, or upon the hollow

shell which was sent over the walls containing the enemy's demand that the beseiged lay down their arms—a demand which elicited the fiery response, “No surrender!”

The town is attractive from a scenic point of view. The walls, the gates, the cannon, the river with the open country rising beyond—all these; but——

But what? I don't know. I wish I did know. The only phrase that comes to my mind in describing Derry is “pleasant but gloomy.” I have looked over William Makepeace Thackeray's Irish notes to see what he made of Derry. He made nothing. He remarks very seriously (almost in tears, for Thackeray), “The public buildings are among the best I have seen in Ireland and the Lunatic Asylum, especially, is to be pointed out as a model of neatness and comfort.”

As smoke-colored evening settled down over the ramparts of the somber little city, a strange and highly scandalous thought came into my mind. “What would Derry be like today,” I wondered, “if the Thirteen Apprentice Boys had left the gate open!”

2

Since I had sought out Thackeray intentionally in Londonderry, it was interesting to come inadvertently upon his trail a few miles eastward in a village called Limavady. Strolling along the village street with a native of the place, I stopped before a public house which bore this unusual sign: The Peg of Limavady Bar.

“That's a queer name for a bar!”

“Aye. It comes from some verses by a man named Thackeray.”

“Have you a copy of the verses?” I asked.

"No, but there's a gentleman, a Mr. Glynn, keeps a pub down the street and I think he has the poem."

We went to Mr. Glynn's. "It's an old copy I have," said he, "and it's in my safe. You just keep your eye on the shop, Micky, and I'll run home and get it." He returned shortly with a faded newspaper cutting which bore not only Thackeray's ballad but the penciled date, 1884.

The novelist, it appeared, arriving at Limavady in the midst of a long, cold journey, had got down from his "car" in a semi-torpid state and had gone into the public house, where he found a seat by the fire. Following his usual custom, he ordered a beaker of ale. Presently Peg, the barmaid, appeared with his ration—bare-footed, bare-armed, and, according to Thackeray, radiantly beautiful.

“. . . Gods! I didn't know
What my beating heart meant
Hebe's self I thought
Entered the apartment.
As she came she smiled
And the smile bewitchin'
(On my word and honor)
Lighted all the kitchen!

With a curtsey neat
Greeting the new comer,
Lovely smiling Peg
Offers me the rummer;
But my trembling hand
Up the beaker tilted
And the glass of ale
Every drop I spilt it;
Spilt it every drop

(Dames who read my volumes,
Pardon such a word)
On my—whatd'ycall'ems!"

That mishap was apparently a matter of considerable amusement to the dark colleen. But Thackeray, never to be outdone by fate any more than was his own Becky Sharp, turned the episode into a ballad of fourteen stanzas, which (as the payment for verse goes nowadays) probably just about paid for having his clothes dry cleaned.

"Beauty is not rare [he said]
In the land of Paddy,
Fair beyond compare
Is Peg of Limavaddy."

"And is that the place down the street? The Peg of Limavady Bar?" I asked.

"No. I misdoubt that the publican there took the name to help himself along. The real place was across the street from your hotel, but it's no longer a pub. I had that from an old horseshoer, Johnnie Toner. He was eighty-five when he told me about it, and that was twenty-five years ago.

"This was the main coach line between Belfast and Derry, and the old hotel had a great stable with room for a hundred and fifty horses in it and the coaches stopping there every day to change horses. The attics of the house are all in cubicles. A hotel it was, a going concern.¹ I can

¹ This description does not agree with Thackeray's "humble baithouse, Where you may procure whiskey and potatoes"; however, since he changed the name of the town from Limavady to *Limavaddy* in order to make it rhyme with *Paddy*, perhaps this too is more a matter of rhyme than of reason.

tell you who knows about it, and that is Miss McGowan who lives there."

So off we went to Miss McGowan's across from the Alexander Arms, and she showed us the massive wooden arches of the old hostelry, now filled except for a small doorway, with plaster. One, Jamie McKoen who *knew*, she said, had told her long years back that the plans for the place were laid three hundred and fifty years before, and it must be four hundred years by now . . . But the one who *could* tell all about it was an old shoemaker who lived up in the Workhouse, because he had books five hundred years old. . . .

However, we had not only failed to find the original inn but had lost Thackeray out of the conversation too. So we hied us back to The Peg of Limavady Bar (which, when all is said, has the authenticity of nine points of the law) and, after pouring out a suitable libation to Peg's beauty—although at the present writing she could not possibly be less than a hundred and two years—we went our several devious ways.

3

There are a few roads in Ireland where the ordnance map is of very little use to the traveler. Such is the route between Limavady and Ballymoney. Here there are not less than thirty cross roads and oblique roads and parallel roads on which the wanderer may go astray with the utmost ease. Then too, the road itself makes any number of convolutions of its own, passing several times from farmland into peat-and-heather country, and back again; so that if

one comes at last to the outskirts of the thriving market town of Ballymoney instead of to Ballyrogan or Ballygawley or Ballynameen, it is only through the grace of those who have willingly and courteously given him oral directions along the road.

This, one notes, is the time of year for trimming the hedges and for clearing the encroaching sod from the highways. The hedges are trimmed with primitive-looking bill-hooks, and it is surprising what neat work is done with implements which look as though they had been borrowed from the French Revolution.

This is also the time of the year when the duckweed appears at the edges of small ponds, spreading gradually out towards the center and mantling the surface with green. And it is the time of year when the young robins are beginning to try their voices a little, with a few faint chirpings and broken arpeggios—though it will be well into September before they perform to the critical satisfaction of their parents.

In a box stall in a Ballymoney boarding stable, the Wee Horse will rest very comfortably while I go on for a few days' excursion to Portrush and the Giant's Causeway. I tell the yard man to feed the donkey well, for she has gone five hundred miles by road. I tell the bright-eyed old lady at the small hotel where I leave my baggage that I expect to return on Tuesday.

"Ah well," she says, "you don't have to be rushing back on Tuesday. It is a half holiday."

"A half holiday?"

"Yes. I thought maybe you might like to know, because all the shops are closed in the afternoon and you wouldn't be able to do any business anyway."

So! A traveling salesman! I must add that to my list.

4

Portrush is a friendly, unpretentious summering place on the north coast of Antrim eight miles west of the Giant's Causeway, and joined to the latter by an electric railway. Perhaps it would be more accurate to say that the Causeway is joined to Portrush, for that attractive little town, rising on its small peninsula which juts into the sea, has one of the most alluring locations and finest shorelines I had seen in Erin. There are pleasant hotels, a vast expanse of beach, splendid cliffs within walking distance, two kinds of bathing, eight kinds of wind, and any number of individual sand dunes to lie upon within a hundred yards of the town.

There is a golf links, where, if you slice the ball, you may find yourself in the greatest water hazard in the world—the Atlantic Ocean. And there is also that on the golf club grounds which leaves the bracing air quite free from certain gently muttered imprecations, from certain smothered exclamations and rubber-set smiles, and such courteous announcements as, "Go right ahead. We'll wait!"

There is, to be explicit, an eighteen hole golf course for the ladies.

As one rises via the electric line toward the Causeway, the limestone cliffs which bare their eroded surfaces to the sea turn from brown to white. Here at their top upon a huge isolated spar of rock rise the turrets of Dunluce Castle—one of the few impregnable pre-gunpowder fortresses of Ireland. It stands upon a jagged shaft of rock which falls away on all sides in sheer precipices; it is joined to the land by a narrow causeway that has replaced the ancient drawbridge. The pedestal on which it stands is gradually dropping into the sea, indeed one of the rooms

toward the ocean has lost its support and hangs over the abyss, holding to the side of the castle by sheer strength of its beams and plaster.

During a great storm in 1639, while the Marchioness of Buckingham was entertaining guests in the castle, part of the kitchen in which eight servants were at work crashed down to the caves far below.

As the tram comes in sight of the town of Bushmills, where the famous Irish whiskey of that name is distilled, one looks down again at the foot of the cliffs. They have turned from white to a rich, velvety black. This is the volcanic, basaltic rock which also appears in the Giant's Causeway.

5

At the first glimpse of the Causeway, you experience a sense of vacuity. Compared with what you expect to see, you see nothing. Where are the vast pentagonal columns? Down on that little strip of brown rock? You have a fleeting memory of a conversation between Dr. Johnson and his biographer, in which Boswell asks the Doctor whether the Giant's Causeway is not worth seeing. "Worth seeing?" remarks the latter. "Yes! But not worth going to see."

It is not until you had spent two or three hours wandering over, gazing at, and sitting upon a number of those forty thousand columns that the remarkable nature of the phenomenon grips you. The pentagonal and hexagonal pillars twenty inches in diameter and about twenty feet in length, run a hundred feet out to sea in what appears to be the end of a submerged causeway. They are composed of black, volcanic rock and are divided into their strange

polygonal shapes with a nicety that becomes more and more astonishing as the observer lingers among them or walks a few hundred yards along the cliff to note the similar columns in the Giant's Organ or the Giant's Amphitheatre.

How were they formed? The most likely answer seems to be that suggested by the geologist, Mr. W. W. Watts. The molten volcanic rock of which the columns are composed, in becoming cool received an even strain over its entire surface, and—following one of the characteristic results of that even shrinkage which is due to cooling—cracked into hexagonal and pentagonal columns. The reverse of this principle is shown when a dozen cigarettes are squeezed together in the hand. The inner ones become five or six sided like the columns.

As you browse among those dark basaltic pillars smoking your bruised cigarettes, one impression at least becomes very clear. You disagree with Dr. Johnson. The Giant's Causeway is not only worth seeing, but it is worth going to see.

6

"How is the Wee Horse?" I asked the yard man, on returning to Ballymoney.

"Verra lively—verra lively indeed. It's seldom you see a donkey with so much dander as that one's got."

I went into the stable yard where ten children confronted me. There was something festive about them, as though they had gathered for a circus performance. "Is it true, now, that the donkey has traveled five hundred miles?" they asked.

"Yes. But you haven't been bothering her, have you?"

"Oh no," they said; "oh *no!*"

I opened the stable door. Grania was in a terrible state

of indignation. She pranced back and forth across the stall with mouth open and eyes staring like Hyperion's horses in the Parthenon frieze. She glared at me without recognition. She was absolutely formidable. Had she suddenly changed to the donkey of James Stephens which ate chickens and devoured human shoulders?

In any event she needed a new set of shoes. It was necessary to take her to the blacksmith. I called resolutely for a bridle. Several more children, two youths and one or two women had joined the group in the yard and were looking on with speculative eyes.

"You aren't going in there, now!" they inquired.

"Oh yes"—this very carelessly—"she must have some new shoes."

I advanced to the stall with the light gingerly step of an impromptu toreador. I *felt* like a toreador, and it was not nearly so grand as it looks. I waited until Grania was head on, then I tiptoed into the arena. As she wheeled, I sprang for her neck—and missed. She wheeled again, lashed out with her heels, and butted against the stall door, shutting it with a bang. We were alone . . .

Down the valley in a locust tree by the river, the drowsy drone of the katydids sounded through the still summer air. It was August. Bees, half-asleep, dallied long moments in each flower-cup. After an interminable time, they rose, heavily laden, and buzzed slowly away with their saccharine loads. It was still August.

I opened the splintered door of the box stall and came out with Grania. Grania was in the bridle. There was no dust on my garments (for I had brushed them off). I looked

calmly upon the white faces of the assembled crowd. But believe me, no one in the world need ever again explain to me the meaning of that utterly descriptive phrase, "By the skin of your teeth!"

7

The blacksmith shop in Ballymoney was one of the best. There were two master blacksmiths in it, several journeymen, and several apprentices. It contained moorings for at least twenty horses. There was a set of padded stocks for animals who were "wicked." "I see all the 'wicked' horses about here for sixteen miles, but barring a 'shiverer' I never put one in the stocks," said the chief smith. Certainly the stocks were not needed for Grania. She had lost her anger completely and stood motionless while he fitted her shoes.

"What makes a donkey get ill-natured so suddenly?" I inquired.

"Well—they're like people. Some one may have tempted them when they were young. Sometimes they get set in their ways when they get old."

"But this donkey is only three," I assured him.

He put down his tools and looked into her mouth.

"Three? Who told you that, now?"

"The tinker I bought her from. His name was O'Leary."

"Na," said the blacksmith, "she'll never see ten years again."

Poor Grania! In a journey of three months she had aged seven years!

Back at the hotel, the old lady who had seen us go past from the boarding stable to the smithy, admitted that she

did not understand it at all. She thought I had bought the donkey for some one else, but she simply did not understand. When I told her, however, that the Wee Horse was mine, all was well between us. She came into the dining room and sat very primly across from me at tea and told me with a charming combination of dignity and lightness of touch (which all of us can only hope to be blessed with as we grow old) that her father had always kept a donkey about the yard, a very intelligent ass who would come right into the house to get a piece of sugar. She herself used sometimes to put a drop of whiskey on the sugar, and the ass would be so enthusiastic over that Bacchic combination that he would do everything but speak.

It seemed that when her father was bed-ridden and in his last illness, one of the sons had sold the animal to a Major Montgomery of Ballysomething who had taken a fancy to it. But when the old gentleman found out about the transaction, the shock was so severe that he took a turn for the worse; so that the son had to go out and buy another ass and bring it up to the father's bedside, "because he always liked so to have an ass about the house."

She too laughed a little at that and smoothed out her black dress, and remarked that it was queer and long since those days and that many changes had happened. But it was good stock she was from, she wanted me to understand that. ("Thank God I was well reared," she said, "and I like to keep my position.") There was a time in the long ago, and a good time too, when her people had owned three public houses. Three . . .

There are a number of pleasant folk in Ballymoney. One might think from the town's name that it would be a tight-fisted little place with an eye only to profits; but it is not. At least there was no sign of it among the following people:

- 1 tailor
- 2 blacksmiths
- 5 blacksmith's helpers
- 1 hotel proprietress and her daughter
- 1 stable man and his wife
- 1 stable assistant

A commercial crowd enough, one might think. But the matter of the psychology of towns must again be taken into consideration. These everyday people were extraordinarily alert, generous, and kindly.

For example, I had been told by Murphy in Cork that a set of shoes for Grania en route would cost at least five or six shillings. But the blacksmith in Ballymoney said, "I won't be asking you any more than I do of a local man. The shoes are a shilling apiece."

8

From the map on the book-ends, it will be seen that a straight line from Glengarriff in the south to Ballycastle is nearly as long a straight line as can be drawn in Ireland. These towns mark the extremes of our journey, for Ballycastle is the point at which we are to turn south again.

It will also be noticed that the east coast of Ireland is comparatively even, while the west coast is cut by mighty bays and serrated by vast peninsulas into an enormously irregular coastline where frequent excursions and meanderings have been necessary. The journey south will be easier and shorter.

It had been raining when we started south from the small coast town of Ballycastle; but now the sun, following its

regular schedule, sent the lash of its electrons along the edge of the clouds and drove them out to sea, their reversed banners of rain aslant to the incoming tide. North and south along the coast, the immemorial headlands of Antrim projected their blackened beaks far out into the white surf.

There are two roads eastward from Ballycastle. One, a very good road, lies inland. The other with a "view" climbs along the cliffs and is guaranteed to burn out the brake-linings of man, motor, or beast. What a road! Within the space of a mile it rises almost from sea level to a height of seven hundred feet, coiling upward over a desolate moor; appearing, disappearing; slipping into the convolutions of the land like a gigantic white snake.

The Wee Horse, hardened as she was, would never have made the grade without assistance at the back of the cart.

"How far is the coastguard station?" I asked a shepherd at the top of a particularly venomous twist of road.

"About a mile."

"And is the road beyond to Cushendall as bad as this?"

"Aye. Twice as bad! Three times as bad! It's the worst road, they say, in Ireland." And it was.

Compared with the rugged promontories of Clare and Mayo, the Antrim headlands are rather trim and neat, with turf and crops growing to the edge of the cliffs. The coastwise scenery between Ballycastle and Cushendun, though fine, is not fine enough to warrant the expenditure of man, horse or donkey-power sufficient to climb that heart-breaking road. If it is attempted in a motor, it should be a motor for which one has a vast respect or no respect at all.

After six hours of strenuous pushing and pulling, we came into the town of Cushendun (hardly in condition to note the charm of its small white houses set in the green enamel

of the fields against the blue enamel of the sea) and tramped on a few miles farther to Cushendall, trying to key ourselves to the approaching necessity of finding a stable and a hotel. Of one thing we were both sure—we didn't want to see any more over-dressed summer boarders smiling patronizingly at us. So we stopped at the first pub we came to in the town, and I asked whether they had a stable for a donkey, which they had. I inquired for a room for myself, but the publican's pretty wife said very naïvely that friends had been in the house the week before, and the room was not cleared up yet.

"Oh well, I can go to a hotel."

"Now there's no use in spending a lot of money," she said. "Right over the street is a woman who'll keep you." So I went across the street, and there was a small woman at the door of a small house and she would keep me. She had a brother who was a lieutenant on the New York police force, and a house as clean as a whistle, and a nice younger sister who taught school a mile or two down the road at Glenarm, and a magnificent, shining kitchen stove, who was a member of the family too.

We sat about it and talked until late about all manner of things—they talking particularly about the fine times they had in the house of a winter's evening when their friends and neighbors came in, and the tables were pushed back, and there was dancing and playing and gayety which one couldn't find in the summer.

There were hundreds of Antrim people in Brooklyn, they said; and in the Flatbush section where their brother lived, one couldn't walk home from church on a Sunday without seeing some one from Antrim on the street.

And all this time on the back of the stove a great kettle of porridge was simmering. Was it for breakfast, I asked?

No, it was for *now*. That was the custom. So they got out plates and spoons, and we filled the hiatuses in our constitutions and went pleasantly to bed.

9

Cushendall is in the very center of a series of eight graceful valleys which extend inland from the sea and are known as the Glens of Antrim. The vale of Glengariff, "Queen of the Glens," lies a mile to the south of Cushendall. The hills there seem to have been parted evenly, sweeping up on either side from a valley of charming proportions, garmented with lovely farms and farmland, and clusters of walnut and birch which fill the bottoms, and a rushing rivulet which leads upstream to Glengariff Falls amid a thicket of rocks and greenery at the head of the glen. At first, one feels a little regret that the water which pours over the little cataract is not "clear as crystal." But that comparison is soon forgotten in realizing that it is exactly the rich golden brown of Guinness Stout!

Laurels grow in the valley, and lime trees; and there are many hedges covered with raspberry blossoms, beneath which little girls with baskets are gathering wild strawberries. And everywhere there is a white, powdery sprig of a plant called Queen of the Meadow, with a slight fragrance about it as though it had been kept among the gloves and laces of a lovely lady.

If it is wildness that one remembers upon leaving the Glens of Antrim, it is a sophisticated wildness. At the top of the pass beyond the rail head which leads to Ballymena, the highlands became considerably more rugged than they had been for some time, and I thought to myself, "Ah,

here is wildness after all!" But at that moment, out of the solitude came a vendor in a gayly-painted two-wheeled chariot selling watery slabs of ice cream—of which I bought two, and went on, not at all improved by the meeting.

BELFAST

CHAPTER XXIV

1

At the Whiteside Hotel at Ballymena, you may, if you choose, witness a strange but impressive ceremony. As far as I know, it is the only one of its kind in the world. Go into the Commercial Room about quarter before ten in the evening and sit down among the traveling salesmen who are busily figuring their accounts for the day. With the stroke of ten, the door swings open, and in stalks the solemnist "boots" in Ireland—tall, thin, spectacled, and serious as a Boston school teacher in the winter of 1777.

His long arms are folded around a large number of indistinguishable objects of cloth, all about the same size and made up in various dull colors. He opens his arms; the objects fall with a thud to the floor; he turns and stalks silently away. You look closely at the objects. They are slippers.

The other guests are also eyeing the pile of booteens. They look solemnly at each other. They look at you.

"What is that?" asks one who is a stranger.

"Slippers," say the others. Augustly, one by one, or perhaps in groups of two or three, they take off their shoes, select, each one, a pair of slippers, and put them on.

"But how," falters the newcomer, "how do they know who has been wearing them?"

"It is all right," answers one. "I remember this pair. I had 'em last year!" By this time all of you are shaking

with mirth. Hush! Here is the "boots" again. He takes up the discarded shoes pair by pair and marks with white chalk the room number of their owner on the soles. He tucks them under his arm and departs.

"What *is* the idea?" asks the stranger amid smothered laughter.

"Oh, he's taking them away to polish them."

"But why don't we leave them outside our doors?"

"Because that is not the custom."

"Is this done in any other hotel in the North?"

"No. Only here."

"Well, what—" But it is of no use. They know no more about it than you or the other stranger. They return to their sales and percentages. The rite of the slippers is complete.

2

I did not take the Wee Horse into Belfast. I left her in a paddock in the town of Antrim. Some one had told me that Belfast would not appreciate her—that there were thousands of mill-workers there, and that if we happened to pass by as they came out of the mills from work, there might be a humorous tendency on their part to smash things up. That, I was sure, was entirely false. But Grania and I, like many others who are long-mated, were ready for a short vacation. She to her paddock, then, and I to the Imperial Hotel.

From the standpoint of highly distinguished beauty, Belfast has not a very great deal to give and knows it. (Though what it has, is very pleasantly and very modestly presented in its small official guidebook.) From the standpoint of industrial interest, however, Belfast has more to

offer than any other city in the country. It is the headquarters for the far-reaching Irish linen industry. Its tobacco, starch, terra cotta, rope, whiskey, and bottling industries are matters of importance in the United Kingdom. But above all these—dominating Belfast like the mighty steel masts which rise beyond the Victoria Channel—is the absorbing matter of ships.

I was fortunate to come into Belfast on a Sunday, and more fortunate still, on a Sunday when the sun was shining. A graye and dignified city, this, with as fine, clean streets and handsome a city hall as any municipality could wish.

I walked from the hotel along Donegal Square, turned instinctively to the left, and, after threading several of the smaller streets, came at last to the wide River Lagan with its forest-like clusters of masts and the great steel cranes and gantries rising like the black lace ruff of a Spanish queen against the sky. Here the *Olympic* had been built, and the *Rotterdam* and the *Amerika*, and the *Baltic*, and the unhappy *Titanic*.

All along the Clarendon Dock lay merchantmen, packet-boats, tramps, sea-rovers, and ragamuffins—the *Esperanto* of London, The *Melissa* of Algiers, the *Zeus* of Athens, the *Duca* of Genoa—bless 'em; while larger vessels of a steadier trade found moorings along the York Dock.

I talked with a man who was standing on a bridge looking at the gantries of one of the ship-building works, which at the time were empty.

"Sure, God has put a curse on the place," he said nodding at the gantries. "Not a stroke of work for six months! Not the sound of a hammer."

"How do you account for it?"

"Sure it started with the trouble between the North and

the South. I was here the first day of it, and a great gang of Protestants with sticks and stones and hammers came down and beat the brains out of the Catholic workmen. It was done for love of religion. They said afterward it was roughs that done it; but there was eighteen thousand men over there at work, and there wasn't men enough among them to come down and stop it.

"It was terrible. If you'd been chumming with a Protestant, he'd be likely to open at you the next minute. I had a full revolver emptied at me by me chum.

"This is how they did it. They'd get some fellow to fire a shot in a Catholic district; then the police would come in and raid the houses and never leave you a poker to defend yourself with. And then the mob would come in, firing and shooting."

"Don't you think that there was a sort of hidden fear at the back of it?" I asked. "Fear of being swamped by the South? The North had already given up three of its counties. It was like a little man with a big bag of money."

"Fear nothing," he said. "There are four hundred thousand Protestants in Belfast, and ninety-five thousand Catholics. How are ninety-five thousand going to do anything to the rest? They're just naturally bigoted, that's all."

"But you have to look a little farther than——"

"They're bigoted," he repeated stubbornly. I went on, remembering a few words of a conversation I had had with a Protestant on the motor bus from Antrim that morning.

"Their priests go to school at Maynooth, and they are turned out with a theology fifty years behind times. Fifty years . . . The great trouble with them is that they are bigoted. . . ."

But here was the Victoria Channel, and here at moorings was a destroyer with the Stars and Stripes flying over it; and its navigating officer was standing on the quay and saying to a warrant officer, "What's the matter with that dumb bunny, anyway! I told him before to lash the gangplank fast so it wouldn't scratch the paint!"

This sounded so much like home that I introduced myself—to find that the destroyer was the good ship *Billingsley*, which a week or two earlier had gone to the rescue of Lieutenant-Commander Wade, whose hydroplane, during the course of the first world flight, had got into trouble near the Faroe Islands.

"We were a hundred and twenty miles west of the 'plane when she came down," said the navigating officer. "Look at those stacks! We gave the *Billingsley* all she'd take . . . twenty-nine knots. Lord, but old Wade was glad to see us. 'Believe me,' he said, 'the destroyer looked good when I saw her tearing up!'"

As I was absorbing this information, two of the destroyer's men wearing side arms and the badges of special police came down the gangplank, saluted, and went toward the city.

"We have a crew of a hundred and thirty-five aboard," explained the navigating officer, "and so we send a couple of men ashore as police. By the way, is there any fighting going on between the Protestants and the Catholics here?"

"No," I said.

"Those special police," went on the navigating officer, "happen to be Irish lads with south Irish names. One is O'Sullivan and the other is O'Hara. I said to O'Hara, 'You had better not tell them on shore that you are Irish. 'Well

sir,' he said, 'you only have to look at our faces to see that we're not Jewish.' "

We watched the two square-shouldered, well-poised youths pick their way between the coal piles down the Albert Quay.

"One of the damn best things about the Irish," said the navigating officer, "is their sense of humor."

"That's right," said I, looking a little doubtfully toward the city.

4

The drawing opposite page 262 was made in a huge grain shed on the Albert Quay. The men in the foreground were members of what is known as a "forty-ton gang" consisting of five men who move forty tons in the morning and another forty in the afternoon. When the grain bags, which weighed from two hundred to two hundred and seventy-five pounds each, arrived at the bottom of the chute from the ship, it was the duty of this gang to shift them across the grain shed on their shoulders and pile them in orderly stacks where they awaited transportation to the city. They were a rough, good-natured crew and seemed to enjoy being sketched. Occasionally they sent a scout over to report how the drawing was coming on, but he never really came near enough to see it, always lingering afar off as though he thought the thing might explode.

Not so a little old man with a dust cart and broom. He held his station so long and silently behind me that I forgot he was there until at last, using his most carefully chosen English, he asked the old infuriating question, "*What is that intended to represent?*"

One should never say to a man sketching, "What is

that intended to represent?" One should ask him what one really wants to know: what is he doing it for, or how much a tube of paint costs, or does he earn his living that way for goodness sake, or does he really imagine he can sell a thing like that, or any similar question that comes into one's head. But after standing behind him for ten minutes studying his efforts, one should *not* say, "What is that intended to represent?"

"This is a sketch of those men unloading the sacks from that boat," I replied, as calmly as possible.

"I see," he said, with great kindness and great courtesy, and then taking his little cart, he trundled away leaving me in a state less than the dust beneath his chariot wheel.

5

But now the workers had finished, and bore down on me en masse. They examined the sketch minutely.

"Look at Walker! He hasn't got his hair combed."

"Aw, Walker, he won't comb his hair for nobody!"

"Where are you, London?"

"Me? Oh, 'e only puts in the 'andsome lads, like you."

"Who's that with the red shirt?"

"That's Kirby."

"Was he up there today?"

"Sure!"

One of the group was silent. His eyes were riveted on his own likeness in the foreground, with a huge sack upon his shoulders.

"Look at *me!*" he burst out at last, "Standin' right there in the front for the rest of me life *with a muffler around me neck!*"

"Good for Eddie," the others roared, "doin' a little work for himself at last!"

As I packed up the canvas, the words of the navigating officer on the *Billingsley* came back to me. "One of the damn best things about the Irish is their sense of humor."

"NOT ONE INCH!"

CHAPTER XXV

1

THE straight road from Antrim to Dublin town is a long grind. Fortunately there are half a dozen towns along the way about twenty miles apart, with an occasional intermediate town, like Crumlin near Lough Neagh, to break the day's journey. Lough Neagh, beside being the largest lake in Ireland, is the largest lake in the British Isles.

There was an old man at Crumlin who sold me a small piece of petrified wood. The Crumlin River is famous for petrified wood, but it was the first sale that the old man had made in three weeks. "Begob, it's enough to make the best of a man lie down and crinkle up his toes. The summers do be gone out of the country. No one comes walking for fear he may have to go swimming."

"I suppose that this is the worst summer you remember."

"No. I mind one about thirty years ago that was worse. There was no potatoes at all, that year. Now they have old age pensions and the like. It makes things a little easier."

Beyond Crumlin a view of Lough Neagh stretched away to blue, misty shores where there were woods and moors, tender as Hy-Brasail, the land of the blest. It was along Lough Neagh that I first saw apple and pear orchards of any considerable size in Ireland. And it was here that I saw a single branch of oak which the advance agents of that destructive old Bolshevik, Autumn, had painted a rich, flaming red.

So, toward the evening of the first day out from Antrim, we came pegging into Lurgan down North Street from the north. I found a public house, and—with the aid of one of those strange little men so common in Ireland who spring up from nowhere, help one, and disappear with a smile—brushed, watered, and fed the Wee Horse and left her to her rest.

“Is there a hotel near?” I asked the publican.

“We can put you up here if you like,” he said.

“Thank you,” I answered (not entirely happy at the prospect, however. For after being melted down by several days in a Belfast feather bed and frozen up again by a twenty-one mile march, my bones called loudly for a more luxurious resting place than that which is usually to be found over a saloon).

But the publican led me up a stair which was clean with a wax-like cleanness, and into a small room with white enameled woodwork, light blue wall paper, and creamy curtains at the windows. On a black and gold table lay a white, freshly-starched tablecloth embroidered with white flowers, upon which was another cloth, covering a flat, square box. Upon that box stood another smaller box with still another embroidered and freshly starched cloth over it. And upon this little throne stood a plaster figure of the Madonna in delicate colors and gold. About her shoulders twined a fragile rosary, and a small black crucifix rose before her with a candle at each side.

A picture of the Mother and Child with a strange conventionalized gold background hung beside it. On the wall was a little receptacle for holding holy water, and a motto saying, “Sacred Heart of Jesus, Bless our Home.” From down below came the strangely contrasting click of glasses and the sound of voices at the bar.

Mine host came in with a newspaper and asked what I would have for tea. "Ham and eggs," I said with gusto. He smiled and departed, and presently hailed me to an excellently prepared tea in a cheerful room over the bar where a great fire was burning.

I glanced at the newspaper. It was Friday, good heavens! I had done the same old thing again—ordered meat in a devout Catholic house on the Catholic fast day. I remembered a Catholic friend of mine once saying with a sort of good-natured exasperation, "It seems to me as though you Protestants never took so much real pleasure in ordering meat as you do on Friday!"

A little later, out of interest in the matter, I spoke about it to the host, quoting what my friend had said and adding that while I knew it was not necessary, I had made it my custom in devout Catholic houses to follow the custom of the house, but that Protestants simply were not keyed to remembering the fast day.

"Don't speak of it at all," he replied pleasantly. "I'll serve you what you ask. It isn't the easiest thing in the world for a Catholic always to be remembering the fast day either; and besides, Protestant or Catholic, we're all very much the one thing anyway."

As I went to bed in the room of the little shrine, I could not help thinking that it would not have hurt two men of Belfast to have listened to those understanding words between a publican and a sinner.

2

Banbridge, with its wide shopping center where the highway runs picturesquely through a tunnel between parallel, uprising streets, has a tavern at its southern end which

marks the location of the old toll gate—a barrier which Dick Turpin and other gentlemen of the road were accustomed to leap in their frolics with the police of an earlier day. To gallop at top speed across the meadows beyond Banbridge must have taken some nice riding, for this is the heart of the flax country abounding with sudden ponds and dams and ditches for retting the flax.

Retting—or rotting—consists in immersing the plants, which have been pulled up by the roots and bound into small bundles, in ditches of water where fermentation is set up (thereby causing unhappiness for those who chance to pass that way). At the same time a chemical change takes place in the intercellular substance of the plant, thus making possible the process of scutching, in which the fibers are freed from their woody core over a sort of steel comb. After several further operations, the product evolves into beautiful bundles or hanks—like trophies of a Norwegian Bluebeard—from which, after still other operations, linen is spun.

As we came well out of Banbridge a young boy ran breathlessly up with a handbill saying, “There’s a *sale!* You might want to come back!” But the items on the bill were all of feminine apparel.

Ladies’ Shoes, Real Glacé
3-bar Shoes, all leather
Ladies’ Shoes, Nigger Glacé
Strapped Shoes, all leather

There was something cataclysmic about that refrain! As though man had made a shoe machine, and the machine had suddenly raised up its voice in a harsh, dismal, bellowing chant. “Ladies’ Shoes, Real Glacé; 3-bar Shoes, all leather. . . .” Anyway, as the only member of the caval-

cade who might have been interested, was so little interested even in her own shoes that she tried to kick them off whenever the occasion permitted, I did not stir her up about all these bargains and this holiday wear—particularly as our next town, Newry, was still unconscionable miles away. So we pounded along the old post road, hitting on all six as the motorists say, until dusk came down and the rain with it, bringing a heavy infusion of gloom and changing Herself's pace to something between a halting crawl and a trawling halt.

Now as we dragged along, a motorcycle with a sidecar came into view ahead of us driven by a man of perhaps forty, with three children in the car. The driver's attention was fixed on us, and as the motorcycle swept by, his eyes lit up with friendly excitement, and he shouted, "There's the man that—hurrah, old boy!"

Being greeted like this by a total stranger in a strange country three thousand miles from home was undeniably pleasant. Why shouldn't I admit it? Small, agreeable thrills ran down my jaded backbone. I threw out my chest to the weather and stepped off with renewed animation. I looked at my friend of the iron shoes, half-expecting her to raise her feet in a sort of prancing goose-step. But no. She plodded along in the same dreary way.

Poor old thing! I stopped in the rain and gave her some oats.

3

Newry had been celebrating. Dozens of motorbuses and lorrys, hundreds of motorcars, and a countless number of lesser vehicles had been passing all the latter part of the afternoon toward the north. Within eyeshot of the town we

observed a prodigy. It was a four wheeled victoria, probably one of the few in Ireland, standing quietly by the side of the road, with an ancient, rusty-looking coachman on the box. At the back, between the springs, was a barbed wire entanglement to prevent small boys from “getting a hitch.” A coat of arms was emblazoned on the door, and two old ladies were sitting within.

We passed the victoria; then it advanced, passed us, and stopped. We passed it again. Once more it passed us, traveling very slowly. One felt that if the hairs on one’s head had not been numbered before, they were being numbered then. Old ladies, I suspect that you are sisters under the skin, of those farmers’ wives over there who sit quite frankly by the roadside watching the extraordinary traffic from Newry!

4

And now we came into the wide, picturesque esplanade of the town, with its river and adjoining canal. Though it was nearly dark, great crowds of visitors blocked the streets and bridges, while bands and drum corps now functioning, for one reason or another, in a rather spasmodic way, blared and peeped their plethoric anthems of departure.

It had been a big day in Newry—Black Day, it was called—under the Auspices of the Imperial Grand Black Chapter of the British Commonwealth. Fourteen special trains had come from Belfast alone. Other trains ran from Tynan, Killylea, Armagh, Keady, Markethill, Hillsborough, Dro-more, Downpatrick, Portadown, Scarva, Lisburn and other points north bearing the Sir Knights and their friends, in all nearly thirty thousand, to this, the greatest celebration which had ever taken place in the border town.

This great meeting had gathered at Newry to show that the North was prepared to fight for its territory to the bitter end. It was a day full of threats, thunders, disparagements and denunciations. There should be no alteration of the Border, the North announced, for what the South was after was not an adjustment but absorption of territory.

The front of the speakers' platform bore the inscription in flaming letters, flanked by the Red Hands of Ulster, "Ulster's Answer to the Midnight Treaty—Not One Inch!" No boundary commission was to wrest from them another ell of Ulster territory. "Our fight today," said the Sovereign Grand Master from the speakers' platform, "is the maintenance of the Six Counties intact. . . . We are again behind the walls of Derry, but extended to a larger boundary wall. We are the garrison of that beleaguered territory. No amount of coaxing and cajoling and force will move us from that position. The Union Jack has been hauled down from every flagpole in Southern Ireland. It is ours to maintain, floating high above us as the emblem of peace, prosperity, and security. It is the flag of our Empire. Over two hundred years ago, the crimson banner was kept flying by the fidelity of our ancestors. Today, it is once more threatened. So by one unanimous voice let the old watchword ring again the length and breadth of the Empire, let the loyal breezes waft it to every home here and beyond the seas—*No surrender!*"

I quote these rhetorical lines because they will show better than many pages of explanation the general sentiment of the North in the current Year of Our Lord toward a possible federation with the South.

DUBLIN

CHAPTER XXVI

I

OUR infiltration back into the Free State was accomplished with surprising ease. True, there was a sort of Customs shack by the roadside, but it was deserted. I was not certain that the Border had been reached and crossed until a familiar green letterbox appeared in a roadside wall, with the erstwhile gilded letters, GR, for Georgious Rex, neutralized by a layer of Hibernian paint.

For several tens of miles the landscape had been softening to a wistful loveliness which was to reach its highest beauty in Wicklow country, south of Dublin—a rather intangible change for the moment, of which one could only say that the farms were subordinating themselves to the landscape, and the trees were becoming dark and feathery, and the mountains were growing very blue in the distance—a blue against which the white porcelain insulators of the Belfast-Dublin telegraph line shone like frets of pearl along the gray posts of the road.

Toward twilight, the harbor town of Dundalk came creeping up the long highway. On the bridge before the town stood a venerable bearded man, and he welcomed me with a will and swore that Grania should rest in his stables without cost. And while the man-about-stable and I were disrobing Grania, the ancient stood by, remarking that no doubt, in America, we thought all Irishmen had horns and a tail. And he continued so merrily in this manner that the

unharnessing process became badly involved—whereupon he pounded on the stones with his stick and cried, "That's right! Take off the harness before you take her out of the cart!"

But at last the rite was accomplished to his satisfaction, and I bade him good-by and went out to see Dundalk with a veteran of the Great War who had also seen some of the civil troubles in Ireland. He showed me the three principal churches of the town, beginning very wisely with the least attractive and working up to the cathedral, all the while telling the story of how he had discovered a hidden wine cellar at a village near Jaffa in the Palestine campaign.

". . . an' the sergeant says to me, says-ee, 'Even if you are killed or shot, you'll still be playin' the goat.' But I says to 'im, 'Sarge,' says-I, 'just look at that double block an' pulley in the ceilin'. Look at them planks nailed across the floor-like. Leave me blow them off.'

"Then he goes out, an' I put a gunny sack over the end of me gun so she wouldn't rickysheet, and blow the planks off. An' there is a hole like the mouth of hell in the floor. An' another bloke an' me, we swunged down by the tacklin'. An' there is a passage below a hundred feet long with bottles of coney-ac on one side an' kegs of wine on the other . . . *What a night . . .*"

"Did you get into the trouble here?" I asked.

"No. I was put in the cooler three times on suspicion—once for thirty-six hours, once for three days an' once for a week, but that was all. It wasn't real fightin' here anyway. Pop-pop-pop all night, an' in the mornin' paper, 'Terrible shootin' at Dundalk. Nobody hurt!' No. Those young lads . . . They *thought* it was war—that runnin' out an' poppin' at a lorry an' runnin' away again. Hell! I'd rather have a lifetime of that than one hour of high ex-

plosive. *You* know . . . I wasn't botherin' with it anyway. I'm done. One war is enough; besides I don't believe in fightin'."

Ah, I thought, an idealist, in spite of his rough exterior. "So you won't ever go to war again?"

"No *sir!* You don't get paid enough in the army."

2

The old town of Drogheda, twenty-two miles south of Dundalk, rises pleasantly from woods and pastures beside the historic River Boyne. From the citadel on the south bank is an all-embracing view of the lavender-gray roofs of the town and of the river, winding away up the valley to the famous spot several miles upstream where, on July 1st, 1690, "King William crossed the Boyne."

It will be remembered that the siege of Londonderry ended the last day of July, 1689. After that event, the Catholic troops under James II evacuated Ulster, leaving it in the hands of the Protestants. The following year, King William of Orange himself came over from England to conduct the campaign against James.

The latter, who had been at Dublin, advanced to Dundalk, but fell back to the south bank of the Boyne, William following him and occupying the north bank. The battle which began at dawn on July 1st, has been refought on innumerable anniversaries all over Ireland with words, arguments, exclamations, shillelaghs, guns, and cobblestones. In recent years, however, the bitterness has for the most part died down, leaving good-natured banter. The responsibility for the Irish defeat rests mostly on the ignoble head of James. After watching his weak, sickly, wounded rival swim the river and lead the charge up through the mud of

the river bank, James turned tail and galloped back to Dublin—thereby winning for himself the title of Sheemus a Cacagh, Dirty James. Sarsfield, his brave general, is reported to have said to one of the English, after the battle of the Boyne, "Change kings with us and we'll fight you again!"

Five days later, William, still a little stiff and sore from his recent thirty-five hours on horseback, arrived in Dublin town, while James, at the very front of his retreating army, set sail for France.

3

As I followed the luxurious Boyne upstream from Drogheda through pleasant groves and woodlands to the place of the battle, it became apparent why the Orangeman had not attempted the crossing lower down. The river, never much wider than a stone's throw, now narrowed to a stream not much deeper than a man's height. Beyond it was an unprotected sweep of green fields, across which William's soldiers undoubtedly advanced for the attack. As I looked at that wide, unsheltered meadow, the thought gripped me which so often returns as one stands on an old-time battleground. "Just one machine gun—just one!" (Yet in ten years that too may be forgotten in the reflection, "Just one death ray—just one.")

Beside the base of a recently blown up obelisk which marked the spot of King William's successful advance I met a man fishing for eels.

"The Republikers smashed up the monument out of spite," he said. "Look at it now! It's sorry a bit of good it did them, and it took a lot of work to build. When they blew it up, it lay across the road as high as you and me together. But there be a power more people coming here since than

before. Last week there was three or four dozen chary-bangs here full of laboring men, with a couple of half barrels of porter in each of them. They might as well take a holiday, for there's no work anyway." He pulled in his line, on the end of which dangled a piece of vermilion cloth. "That," he explained, "is what you call a bub. It's red flannen. The eel takes a juicy bite of that, and he don't know it before he's on the bank."

"How's the fishing?"

"Not too good. You might get a few eels, and sell them for a bob or two. It's better to be doing something than to be standing around town. The older men are all right. They'd work if there was work to do, but the young fellers—lazy, that's all. They have a bit of unemployment pay from the government, and then they stand around in their good suit on the street corner, and rather get along on one meal a day than look for a little work. *It's terrible the change that's come over the young people.*"

I turned back to the Drogheda road with a sigh. Somehow, somewhere in the world, I seemed to have heard that unimaginative refrain before.

.4

Weaving itself unshrinkably into the garment of an early September morn, came the village of Balbriggan, the town of the wearwithalls, whose name, to a past generation, was the symbol of nothing much to speak about. And here was the sea again—the good old globe-encircler, with wheat fields down to its very brim—all glorious under the spell of the first entirely cloudless day in months. Now, as though it were attempting to make up for all its wetness, the weather became hot. Yet this day was as nothing to the day which

followed. We advanced limply through the scorching hours of the second day, Grania and I, only straightening up temporarily at the approach of some affable photographers from a newspaper syndicate in the now not-far-distant city. Indeed, late in the afternoon—winding in through tall woods, and steaming fields, and shining villages—we came at last to the outskirts of Dublin town.

Our destination was the Westbrook Hotel on Parnell (née Rutland) Square at the head of O'Connell Street. The hour was half-after five, at which time huge crowds from the city were returning to their homes in the suburbs. We advanced moistly, under the fire of ten thousand Dublin eyes. Once (perhaps in embarrassment), Grania slipped on the smooth cobblestones and fell. I seized her and helped her up. Fortunately, she had injured nothing but her pride. After that we went forward with extreme care, inch by inch, like an aged couple over a street strewn with banana peelings.

Out of the effacement of that unspeakable heat, only one other detail of the journey comes back to me. It was a large, painted street sign which read, "Harold's Laundry. Collars a specialty."

5

Armed one morning with the letter of the English doctor from Glengarriff, I inquired my way to Plunkett House in Merrion Square, which held the editorial offices of *The Irish Statesman*. In my mind there were certain misgivings. "If 'A. E.'¹ likes you," the lady at Glengarriff had said, "he will invite you to one of his Sunday evenings at his house." Those evenings, I knew, had marked the flood tide of that movement which will always be known in the history of literature as the Irish Renaissance. No wonder then, as

¹ See note on page 49.

I mounted the steps of Plunkett House, that the air seemed filled with the sound of fateful wings.

One thing was certain. If my head was to be bloody, it would at least be unbowed. I would not hint, suggest, or make manifest in any way to "A. E." the pleasure which such an invitation would hold—not if I were to stay in Dublin a thousand years!

"Yes," said the lad at the door, "Mr. Russell is in and is not engaged." I might go right up.

So I climbed a broad stair and knocked at a door to the left. "Come in"—and there at a great desk, was "A. E." himself—large, rubicund, shining-faced, chestnut-bearded, with steel-rimmed spectacles; flanked by two pleasant ladies, neither of whom by the wildest stretch of imagination could be fitted to the mental image which rises in the New York mind at the word "stenographer."

"A. E." read the letter of his friend the doctor and advanced with kindly, outstretched hand to greet me.

"Just sit down for a moment, won't you? I'm sending a letter or two. Will you have a paper?" He looked a little doubtfully at a precarious pyramid of journals, reviews, and magazines on the top of his desk. I had a paper of my own, however, and while he went on with his dictation, I made an effort to read it. But in spite of myself the low, hesitating voice of "A. E." came drifting across the room.

Now the lady who was taking his notes had gone; and "A. E." was saying, "So you are traveling with a donkey and a donkey cart. I know a man who traveled that way in company with tinkers about the country—Padraic O'Conaire—a man who writes in the Gaelic language perhaps better than any other living man. An undoubted genius . . . It takes a young man to travel like that. Ah, it is interesting,

but it is not a thing for a man of years. . . . And why are you traveling in that way?"

I told him, adding that I wanted particularly to see Ireland at peace.

"Peace," he repeated in some surprise. "Certainly no one considers the Irish a warlike nation!"

"I'm very much afraid," I said, "that that is the impression just at present on our side of the Atlantic."

He raised large, friendly, protesting hands and looked seriously out from behind his steel-rimmed spectacles. "But Ireland is really a very peaceful country! When you meet a man, he being fifty-eight years, who has only seen active trouble once in all that time, it cannot mean that the land is a very militant land. And it was only a very small rebellion then—nothing like your Civil War. Do you know that there are more people murdered every year in New York and Chicago than were killed in the last trouble in Ireland?"

I did not know it, but having lived for two years in Chicago, and having had two personal burglars of my own in New York, I was quite willing to believe it.

"It is perhaps reasonable to think that our experiences here are exaggerated," went on "A. E.," "because we have been a country standing in an empire's way. If the little fighting which we have done in Ireland had taken place in Denmark or Sweden, nothing would have come of it at all. But here, every shot is noticed and megaphoned all over the world. Particularly, these things are magnified when they cross the ocean. It is like this . . ."

As he continued talking, I listened with great pleasure to the words rolling simply, melodiously forth. Occasionally there was a trace of hesitation which gave his pronouncements the imprint of modesty. Now he had changed to an interrogative.

"Why is it you are taking a donkey, rather than walking alone?"

"I am making some sketches in oil on the way, Mr. Russell, and the paint is too heavy to carry."

"You paint, then! That is interesting. I paint a little too."

"I know," I said.

"Now how do you know that?" he asked in evident surprise, and apparently with some pleasure.

"I knew it before I left the United States," I said. "Besides, I saw some of your paintings at Glengarriff."

"Those weren't very good ones. Of course, at best, I'm only an amateur. You know, I didn't paint until I was forty . . . Are you to be in Dublin long?"

"For a week, I think."

"I'd like to show some of my better things if you would care to see them. *Are you going to be busy Sunday night?*"

"No," I said. "No."

In the meantime, he had risen and gone to his desk and was writing something on the back of an envelope. Now he returned, saying, "Sometimes other people come in Sunday evening. Padraic Colum may be there." He held out the envelope to me. I read:

Ernest Russell
17 Rathgar av
Sunday
8-2-25

"Sunday evening at eight, then," he repeated as we said good-by.

So one, who had gone up the steps of Plunkett house with certain misgivings, came out again, holding carefully in his hand an inexpensive—though by no means ordinary—manila envelope.

"A. E."

CHAPTER XXVII

1

"A. E.'s" house is the second in a connected row of modest brick dwellings which stand each behind its small inclosed plot of greenery in Rathgar Avenue. Rathgar Avenue is not in any way ostentatious. Between the tram line and the house—a matter of a hundred yards—there is a grocery shop, a contractor's office, a sweet shop, and a boot-maker's. Tiptoe on the flat top of a dwelling across the way is a cupid, a veritable Irish cupid with drawn bow, caught into painted iron in the entirely illegal act of ambushing passersby.

I turned into an iron gate, climbed a few old stone steps which might have been precarious in the dark, and knocked. A quick, youthful step was heard within; the door opened and "A. E."—behind the friendly Thackerayan barricade of beard and spectacles, again stood holding out his hand.

It was just eight o'clock. No one else was there. I could see his paintings at leisure, he said, before the others came. We went from the little hall into the first of two large rooms which opened into each other from front to back, after the fashion of most town houses. A number of canvases hung in rows upon the walls, and stood piled below in orderly stacks.

He began at once in a business-like way to show the paintings, selecting, displaying, discarding, and at the same time listening with a friendly smile to my comment.

2

An estimate of "A. E.'s" paintings is not easy. By assuring one that he is an amateur, he nearly disarms one before the battle begins.

His paintings may be broadly divided into two groups: landscapes (with or without figures), and imaginative figure compositions.

Of the landscapes, the scenes off rocky coasts such as those of Donegal and the west of Cork seemed to me to be the finest. They are limited by no time or period. They are untrammelled and universal.

The subjects of the landscape group describe a wide curve from open seascapes and headlands through rugged valleys and meadows to forest interiors with sunlight flickering through dark forest glades. Though "A. E." has never studied conventionally in schools of art, most of those forest interiors are nevertheless conventional and of a "period." It may be that in some early, impressionable time, he looked too long at Constable or those painters of forest interiors who followed Constable. It is his landscapes of the open which are fine and free. Most painters, most art critics, and perhaps those who know him as a power in the political economy of Ireland, would, I am sure, consider his landscapes to be his finest work. Here is drawing, they would say, anatomy of the terrain, color, and successful arrangement of mass.

Good as his landscapes are, I prefer his imaginative figure compositions. These are fanciful paintings of men and women and shapes which do not exist for most of us upon this earth, but which do exist for "A. E." and for Mrs. Russell who is as much of a mystic as he. I prefer them,

not because I am a gentle sort of wight, intrigued by the illustrative quality of fairy stories, but because here “A. E.” has set down, as well as the limited medium of paint will allow, some reflection of the visions of his own great, buoyant, visionary soul.

A painter who paints landscapes well is no rarity. But a man of fifty-eight who paints very simply and beautifully the land of far desire, the flaming spirit of the unseen, and strange lovely figures from the invisible, a-tiptoe above the foam-crests of a legendary sea, may not elsewhere be found the length and breadth of the land—even if that land is Ireland.

Some one has said to me that some of “A. E.’s” imaginative figures are stiff. I can only reply (without, of course, making an exact comparison, for “A. E.” does not pretend to be a great painter) that the figures of Giotto and Cimabue are also stiff. In other words, I ask that in judging his imaginative paintings, we penetrate beyond the obvious to such standard of criticism as has ignored the barbarism of Matisse, the eroticism of Gauguin, and the muddy color of Cezanne in contemplation of the higher qualities of the painter soul which lie beneath.

3

With an occasional explanatory comment on the countryside or the quality of the Irish atmosphere, “A. E.” finished showing his canvases. Then we sat down before a wide fireplace in the back room and he asked me about my travels through the country. I could see that of the various counties I had visited, Donegal appealed to him most. Soon he was telling me that above other places in Donegal he preferred painting near Dunfanaghy, for “at Dunfanaghy there

is every kind of thing in the way of scenery that you could imagine, all crumpled up into six miles of coast." All manner of elements were there, he said—land's ends, wide coasts, cliffs, picturesque people, houses, fences, gates . . . The gates of Donegal! One could spend a lifetime studying the gates there, and not be finished with them then.

First there was the most primitive gate, which was made merely by tearing down part of the wall of a field and building it up again when the cattle had passed through. When that rebuilding process seemed to be too much work—a piece of gorse was simply put into the hole in the wall. For the next gate, two or three poles were laid across the opening. Then too, people would be having beds; and there is nothing better for a gate than an old bed, except of course, a swinging gate.

"There is still another I have seen," he added, "and that is made of two thin, vertical, forked sticks with another stick laid across the top. The beasts go up to it but do not attempt to force it with their horns. All these gates are still to be seen in Donegal."

He had interrupted himself several times to let people in and to introduce them—Mrs. Russell, several writers, a playwright or two, an American named Chester Arthur, whose grandfather once held an important executive office in Washington, and a young woman, who, I am sure, must have been very rich or powerful or clever or good, for she had the manner of a queen.

The party divided itself into small groups; and I, as a chronicler, underwent the painful experience of knowing that "A. E.," just beyond my ears' horizon, was dropping golden, roseate phrases, and writing high symbols and imagery in the smoke of his dark briar pipe.

But in the general hejira of cakes and tea, matters were altered; and now he was showing me a large bundle of Irish folk-verses with drawings by Jack Yeats, and commenting with the unrestraint of a young man over the various types in Jack Yeats' pictures. A sketch of a youth with very few teeth in his head led me to remark on the very serious lack of care in that particular which I had noticed about the country.

“Yes,” said “A. E.,” “You know what Shaw says: ‘You teach your children to speak Gaelic, but you don’t teach them how to keep their teeth to speak it with.’” And having broached the subject of Gaelic, he went on to say that Synge had done only mediocre things before he learned it, and that Lady Gregory had been writing little more than stories of gossip until she came by it, and that without Gaelic, the early Yeats had hardly done more than follow Keats; while at one time, even James Stephens had seemed to be running dry until he began the study of the native language.

“And yourself?” I asked.

He smiled. “No. I am the only outcast. I followed the East Indian influence very early.”

Now it happened that at the time of this journey, I had an apartment in America with a Hindu scholar from Calcutta, a friend of Tagore’s, and that I also knew, from personal experience something of the inner workings of a Buddhist monastery. So soon we were talking of the *Mâhâbârata* and the *Bhagavad-Gîtâ*. And “A. E.” quoted a line from the Song of Krishna which he liked particularly, about a young girl’s coming of age. “She is a woman. Her eyes have caught the dancing of her feet . . .”

Now he was away again to answer a late summons of the

bell, returning immediately, followed by a small man with a Napoleonic forehead, and a lady with superb ruddy hair and a dress of complementary green.

"This is the man I wanted you to meet. I thought he had gone to Donegal. This is Padraic Colum."¹

I shook hands with Mr. Colum and was about to say something pleasant but casual, when much to my surprise, I found he was no longer there but talking quite intently to some one else on the far side of the room! "A. E." however was still at hand speaking for the moment with another American about America, and saying that he hoped to visit us some day.

"The thing you will perhaps notice most," said the American, "is that many of our newspapers have considerably more relation to something called news than to something called truth."

"Ah, I know," he answered. "There was one of your leading magazines which published an article called 'The Opinions of "A. E."', purporting to be an interview with me. But there had been no interview, and most of the opinions were quite the opposite of my own. I wrote to the editor in protest, but he answered by asking me to write an article for him. That I refused to do, asking him to correct some of the 'opinions' which were entirely false. But no corrections were made, and I never heard from him again."

"What was the magazine, Mr. Russell?"

He named one of the greatest monthly magazines in the United States.

¹ Padraic Colum was born in Longford, 1881. He is a distinguished poet, dramatist and lecturer, a founder of the Irish National Theatre (which preceded the Abbey) and author of *Wild Earth*, and other volumes of poems and prose. He spends much time in the United States.

4

Now people were moving about and looking at the paintings and eating up pieces of cake which through the merest chance had remained on the tea table.

And here was Padraic Colum talking with a professor from Trinity about the very ancient civilization of Crete, and whether it might not be identified with that of Atlantis. Some of the Greeks thought so. Certainly the early civilization of Egypt was a partial basis for Greek culture. The only one of the Greeks who did not fall for the Egyptians was Plato.

Then the professor moved away, and I was able to say honestly to Padraic Colum a thing which any man might be glad to hear of his native land: that in my travels about Ireland I had found his work, of all the modern poets, foremost in the hearts of the people.

Later I asked “A. E.” why the other modern poets were not read to any great extent in Ireland. He replied that he and Mr. Yeats were anathema because of their beliefs, but that Mr. Colum, who wrote beautiful poetry, had not run against any reefs of creed, and that some of his work had been used in the school books for the Irish children. In proof of the quality of that poetry, he got out a book of Mr. Colum’s poems and, with raised hand almost imperceptibly beating the accents, he read for me in a chanting voice which was almost Grecian in its emphasis of the stressed syllables, the finest of the poems.

There may be those who would find “A. E.’s” reading a little didactic or perhaps a little rhapsodic—a little reminiscent of the myrtle branch at an Athenian feast. I do not. As I listened, there came to me in swift vision the stir

of sunlight on the Mediterranean, and an Ionic city, and the voice of a blind poet chanting mighty lines from the *Odyssey* or the *Iliad*.

When he had finished, since we were on the subject of poetry, I spoke of a matter which had been on my mind before. "I've been wondering," I said, "whether you would let me have a poem of yours for my book on Ireland—something which you like yourself."

"Why yes. Something recent, I suppose." He hurried away with his buoyant step, returning in a moment with a sheet of proof.

"I saw a man in a field at evening," he said, "working in a furrow, he hurling the clods this way and that in a sort of ungovernable anger and protest which comes to a tired man. Here it is . . . The curious feeling you have of the divine image showing through . . ."

SURVIVAL

What pent up fury in those arms
Red gilded by the sun's last breath!
The spade along the ridges runs
As if it had a race with death.

The clods fly right; the clods fly left;
The ridges rise on either side.
The tireless fury is not spent,
Though the fierce sunset long has died.

The strength which tossed the hills on high,
And rent the stormy seas apart,
Is still within those mighty limbs,
Still stirs the dreams of that wild heart.

"A. E."

"THE DESERTED VILLAGE"

CHAPTER XXVIII

1

DUBLIN was the best starting point for the midland city of Athlone and for the village of Lissoy, which was the early home of Oliver Goldsmith and the scene of *The Deserted Village*. So, after retiring at three A.M. (for the road homeward from "A. E.'s" had been devious) I rose again at seven and repaired to the Midland Station—only to find that the "boots" at the hotel had done the train schedule a violence and myself a most grievous injury. There was no train to Athlone that morning.

Now half a day is a valuable matter, and it becomes an affair of even more value when one has been brutally 'roused after three hours' sleep. As I was casting around for something to do, it occurred to me to see whether this was the station from which trains left for Tara. By bull-headed luck it was, and by more bull-headed luck, a train was to leave for Tara in half an hour.

2

The train stopped at Kilmessen Junction, and I got down.

"Which way to the Hill of Tara, please?" Oh, you had to pass through the village of Kilmessen first, then turn to the left, then to the right, then to the left, then to the left again, and then you'd be there, indeed. It was about four miles away.

A nice looking cab was standing at the station. I inquired of the coachman if it were a public conveyance, but he answered so very politely in the negative that I looked at the vehicle again and noticed a crest on the door. I might find a motor in the village, he volunteered, as I went on.

The village of Kilmessen was such a minute place, however, that I passed entirely through and was out in the fields before I realized that there had been any village at all. I returned to the grocery shop and inquired for a motor, but none was to be had, nor was there a bicycle to be rented nor a jaunting car to be found. A light cart came down the road with a boy driving it.

"Do you think that this one could be hired?" I asked of a crusty old man.

"No. Don't you see it is going the wrong way?"

"You don't have many visitors to Tara, do you?"

"Aye. There was two strangers here Friday week."

2

Tara must have been a hill of peace. Certainly it could not have been a hill of defense, for its grassy top, covering many acres, slopes gently away at all sides to the lovely blue distance of the Meathian plain.

Certain of the old manuscripts also bear out the physical indications of its pacific nature. The ancient chieftains held conference there

" . . . without wounding a man
Among them during all the time;
Without feats of arms, without deceit,
Without exercising horses.
Whosoever did any of these things

Was a wretched enemy with heavy venom;
Gold was not received as a retribution from him
But his soul in one hour.”

The crest of the hill is long and somewhat oval, bearing a number of great circles of earth. These, with several lesser circles near them, were at some vaguely remote time, the foundations of halls and chambers and refectories for the large and complicated retinue of the early Irish kings.

With the help of a map I studied out Adamnan's Rath and the Rath of the King, and Grania's Rath, and the Rath of the Synods; while upon Tara and my map and me, down came the rain like the wrath of heaven. But it stopped quite suddenly, and there at the top of the highest mound, peering down through the warm vapor, stood a stone figure of St. Patrick.

How lonely he must be of nights, I thought, standing there all alone while pagan ghosts and spooks and people of the Shi are playing and wailing and keening about him—and perhaps banshees too, who wail the coming of death. As I went down the road toward Kilmessen (for unless one is an antiquarian, Tara in the rain is a dreary place), I remembered what an old man in County Mayo had told me about a banshee.

“You will hear her crying and sobbing most terribly and softly and bitterly, and the keening of her goes down the breeze and turns the soul of you to ice. And the people who hear it say that there is no earthly sound like it, but that it freezes the marrow of your blood. Sometimes the banshee is heard by two people who support each other's statements as to the time and place. There were two men heard a banshee on that road near the wood there. And she

would come along the road for a space and then keen and wail and then go on toward the village. And in the night an old woman in the village died."

Indeed there is an old verse which says:

"Should you hear a sobbing cry
As of one in doleful plight
Some one in your house will lie
Stark and stiff before the light."

There should be quite a distinguished company of ghosts at Tara. Slainge of the Firbolgs should be there, and Nuada of the Silver Hand, and Queen Maeve of Connaught—the famous Queen Mab of Shakespeare, first mentioned in *Romeo and Juliet* in 1599 and last mentioned by James Stephens in *Deirdre*, in 1924.

Mab, transmuted from history into fairy legend, became the fairies' midwife—that is, it was her duty to see that the fancies of men were well born. She also drove her chariot over sleeping people to produce dreams. Shakespeare not only represented her as a tease and a mischief but as old nightmare herself. (It is easy enough to see her in that rôle. All you have to do before you go to bed is to eat two soft shell crabs and half a pint of strawberry ice cream.)

So I wandered along the road which, to all appearances, led back to Kilmessen; but after an interminable distance, there ahead of me were the roofs and turrets of a Norman castle which I had not seen before. "That," said a passer-by, in answer to my query, "is Dunsany Castle. Kilmessen is down the road two miles to your left." Two miles! And the last train to Dublin would leave in forty minutes! I hurried toward the village.

But that short glimpse of Dunsany Castle brought back another memory to me which, if I am to recount it, must take the form of a confession.

Every evening while I had been in Dublin for the Tailteann Games, Lord Dunsany,¹ sat in the Catholic Club playing in the Tailteann Chess Tournament. I have it from several trustworthy people that no further introduction would have been needed by a stranger than to say that one was an old patron of the Neighborhood Playhouse in New York where many of his plays have been given with much success.

But I did not read the list of the chess contestants; so of the personality of the author of *A Dreamer's Tales*, I have nothing to report. Gentle reader, I give you permission to kick me mentally around several good long city blocks. But at best, that will only be a repetition, for I have already done it very thoroughly myself.

3

Was the lowly frame of mind induced by the above thought the proper state in which to approach the simple, benevolent soul of Oliver Goldsmith? Apparently. For after an evening meal at the Westbrook Hotel (the first meal, by the way, in nine hours), the spirit within became so rebellious at the thought of the body's resting that there was nothing left but to seize bag and canvas, and rush forth to the night train for Athlone.

¹ Lord Dunsany, born in 1878. He is well known to many American readers through his poems, and particularly through his intensely dramatic and poetic plays, of which *The Gods of the Mountain*, *The Golden Doom*, and *A Night at an Inn* are representative. During the Great War he served as a captian in the Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers.

"There's not much left of Goldsmith where you are going," said the driver of the Ford as we turned out of Athlone toward the Shannon.

"No?" But further conversation was prohibited, for at that moment we skidded around a corner almost on top of a bearded man who was driving some cows. He skittered out of the way and shouted after us. The driver stopped the car. "What's that? Oh, you're all right." We started on again, but before us rose up another man with some cows. He was a powerful looking fellow and wore his mustaches waxed. We avoided him narrowly and went on.

"They are both old Royal Irish Constabulary men," the driver said.

"I thought that the Constabulary was pretty well wiped out at the time of the trouble. How did these people get away with their skins?"

"The second one didn't. He got a bullet. He was a bad one! I got a fairly good kickin' in from him. They could take you if they had any suspicion and kick the ribs out of you and let you go again."

We went on for a while paralleling the Shannon through a landscape as graceful as Goldsmith's own "dear lovely bowers of innocence and ease," turning at last away from the river over a little bridge near some railway tracks.

"This is where they fired six hundred shots at us with a machine gun," stated the driver. "I was in a Ford lorry with six men when along came a Free State Rolls-Royce armored car and opened fire on us. They put twenty rounds into the front of the car and smashed the engine, so while they were firing another two hundred rounds, I got the men

away through the dark and we lay down between those double tracks over there. Then they spotted us with a searchlight and let us have six hundred rounds. But the rails were high enough—all except for the calf of my right leg. They thought they had finished us, so they went off through that village there, with two hundred shots left.

“That town’s Upper Clare; the next one is Auburn or Lissoy. It was a fine place once, but the people who lived there went wollop.”

This, then, was the edge of “Sweet Auburn, loveliest village of the plain.” But I shall quote no more from *The Deserted Village*. In this rather petulant and rather incisive time of ours, to quote a few random lines here and there from that eminently gentle poem would not be playing the game. It is already obvious that isolated lines such as those quoted above, ruin the sentiment and leave only sentimentality. *The Deserted Village* is a poem to be taken up gently when one chooses, or perhaps—if one does not choose—not to be taken up at all.

“There is the old wall of his father’s rectory,” said the driver. “But first, if you like, we’ll go on to The Three Jolly Pigeons.”

The Three Jolly Pigeons was a rather neat-looking, slate-roofed public house with a painted signboard showing a table with three beakers on it, three chairs in acute perspective about the table, and three gigantic pigeons on the chair backs. Above was the caption: HEALTH HAPPINESS & PROSPERITY, OLIVER GOLDSMITH SWEET NOLLY.

“The ‘Pigeons’ is very well done up, now,” said the driver admiringly. “It was only a thatched place when I saw it two years ago.”

My spirits sank a little at hearing of this “restoration”

from thatch to slate but rose again on finding that this was not the original "Pigeons" anyway. The old haunt of Goldsmith and his cronies was at another spot farther down the road, but there was nothing left of the old building except a part of the foundations.

"There's a story about this place," said the driver, indicating the new "Pigeons" with his thumb. "A tinker came along a bit lushy, and went in to see if he could be getting the loan of a drink, but the publican would give him none. So he staggered out again and stood studying that sign with the pigeons on it for a few minutes. Then he went back to the door and stuck his head in again. 'What are you wanting now?' said the landlord. 'Go to hell, you and your three ducks,' said the tinker."

"Do you think there is any one about here who is even distantly connected to Goldsmith?" I asked.

The driver rubbed his stubbly chin. "Very few people come here," he said, "and I haven't been here myself for the best of two years. But there used to be an old man named Cormac living down the road. If he is still alive, he might be able to give you some word or other. I could leave you at his place and pick you up this evening at Nolan's where the old rectory is."

5

We knocked at the closed gate of a tiny cottage beside the road. No answer. We knocked again. With a slow creaking of hinges, the upper half of the house door opened, and the rather terrible, gigantic, bowed head of an ancient man appeared, a head with a fringe of white beard, and with features which were enlarged and simplified by great age.

"Good day," said the driver; "this is a gentleman from

America who is interested in Oliver Goldsmith. Could you give him some information?”

Slowly the ancient raised his vast head to my face. Slowly he scanned every feature. Then he lifted an untrembling hand to the hasp of the door. “Come in,” he said.

The small room was in great disorder. Several black kittens stalked among kettles, vegetables, and old garments which lay about the floor. A little fire of soft coal smoked on the hearth. The walls of the room were as black as those of a foundry from a decade-old deposit of dirt and soot.

“Have you lived here long?” I asked.

“Yes, I saw the rectory in its prime,” said the old man, pointing to a seat by the fire. “About ninety-seven years . . . It’s about ninety-seven years since I was born, you might say.”

“Let’s see. Goldsmith died in 1774. That was half a century before your time; I don’t suppose you knew any one who knew him?”

“My father,” said the aged man, “knew Goldsmith. Perhaps it would be better to say, he saw Goldsmith. He saw him as a grown man when he himself was a young child.”

Ninety-seven years. He showed his age in his bowed body and large, distorted features, but his mind was as clear as the mind of a young man.

An old woman came in from the back room. She was thin and wrinkled, with shifting eyes. She spoke in an even, whimpering voice.

“O dear God in Heaven! O what a country! All gone to wrack and ruin. Such weather. Faith, it has rained here for three months. The turf (peat) is all out. We’re all black from coal.”

"It's a stranger from America," said the old man quietly.

"Holy Mother of God, now! America. It's a home and a grave for the Irish. It's a great country. . . . Had you a motor, sir?"

"Yes, from Athlone."

"Oh, the motors got rapidly into action these few years. I have a son. He was here two months ago, the first time he has been back from America in forty years. But to look at him you would not think it was twenty . . . Had you any one else from America on the boat?"

"There were five hundred Irish-Americans who were coming back to see their people."

Her eyes moistened with tears. "Think of that, now. *Think* of that! But what terrible weather for traveling—even in your own house!"

"Is this the worst year you remember?" I asked the old man.

"No. I mind the famine years of '46 and '47 and '48 were worse. I mind pulling the oats by hand, for they were too short to cut. Every man had a mill of his own in those days, a *quailen*—did you ever hear tell of it? A mill that you could turn with your hand. The last one went off to an exhibition to France."

"Throw on another piece of coal, Master," said the old woman. "It's cold." He did her bidding.

"Don't you have good health, madame?" I inquired.

"No. For the last twelve or fourteen weeks, I had what they call the flu. I'm quite stupid with it."

"Old age does a good deal of it," said the old man, gravely and gently. "It would be well to lie in bed tomorrow."

My admiration for the venerable man had been rising steadily. I asked him his opinion about the recent troubles in Ireland.

“Me, and every old man like me, would like a republic,” he said. “But if we behave ourselves and be friendly, we’ll do well enough as it is . . . You see an object and you’d like it, but when you can’t have it, you can’t. Sure, in six months more of fighting between ourselves, we would be destroyed. Fighting is no use. It was poverty made it, of course. The greatest man who gets too much poverty must get queer, even the greatest men in the world—terrible smart fellows. But if they know hunger——”

I sat before that ancient rock of a man in silent wonder. With one gesture of understanding he had cut through the lesser arguments of Republic, Free State, Union, Parliament, and Commission to the heart of the world’s economic unrest—hunger.

“O dear God,” droned the sick old woman. “What a year. The crop is up against the dour. Terrible desecration by the animals. Always walking about on it and destroying it. You can’t be minding them every minute. O dear God!”

But now, remembering my mission, I asked him what he could tell about Oliver Goldsmith.

“I know little more than another,” he replied. “I know that he was pure gold, and that he went about playing his flute and made some money at it. But he couldn’t bear to see children hungry, and divil a shilling he had but he gave it to them, and his blankets too so that he had to cut open his feather bed and sleep inside itself to keep warm. And Burke and Sir Joshua Reynolds came in to see him, and there he was, up to his neck in feathers.”¹

¹ According to Washington Irving, this incident occurred during Goldsmith’s college days at Trinity in Dublin. Burke may have been at Trinity at the time, but was probably not a crony of Goldsmith’s. The friendship with Reynolds was of a later period.

"And The Three Jolly Pigeons of today is not the inn of Goldsmith's time?"

"No. The other was this side the crossroads, where the fingerboard is. That was the place, and a good time they had too. He raised his bowed head somewhat, and in no uncertain voice sang these lines:

"Then come put the jorum about,
And let us be merry and clever,
Our hearts and our liquor are stout,
Here's The Three Jolly Pigeons forever.
Let some cry of woodcock and hare,
Your bustards, your ducks, and your widgeons,
But of all the gay birds of the air,
Here's health to The Three Jolly Pigeons."

"O Mother of God," droned the old woman, "another piece of coal, Master."

6

The remaining front wall of the old rectory of the Goldsmith family stands at a dignified distance from the road, backed by a group of modern, corrugated iron sheds. A few yards away is the house of a farmer named Nolan, who, I am sure, will take good care of the old literary landmark. Nolan was extremely interested in matters pertaining to Goldsmith, and showed me a photograph of the mill (which has completely disappeared) and another of the old schoolhouse. He also pointed out the spot down the road where the schoolhouse had stood, but there was now no trace of it. How was it possible, I asked, that a solid-looking building, which was recent enough to be photographed, had disappeared entirely. He replied that once the roof fell in,

the weather did not take long to level down the mud walls, nor the grass long in covering them. The plow did the rest.

Old Cormac had told Nolan that he remembered the rectory when the roof was on it. It had blown off on the Night of the Great Wind in 1839. The chimney had blown down during another wind in 1902 or 1903.

As we walked together back toward the rectory, we passed a small pond in which some waterfowl were swimming. “That,” Nolan said, “is the pond with the gabbling geese he speaks about in *The Deserted Village*.”

The idea stirred me. I hurriedly got out my notebook. “How many geese are there on the pond now?” I asked.

Nolan rubbed his chin and coughed. I noticed at once that something was wrong.

“What’s the matter?” I inquired.

“That isn’t geese,” he said. “That’s *ducks*!”

It was dark when I arrived again in Athlone. I contented myself with seeing the small cottage on the main street beyond Egan’s shop in which the singer, John McCormack was born. His father had been a workman in the woolen mills in the town.

There is only one other note to add relating to Oliver Goldsmith. In Athlone I met the old-age pension officer for the district, and told him how old Cormac had said that his father had seen the poet.

“I did not know that!” said the pension officer. “I’ve been going about for a long time, but I never spoke to the old man about Goldsmith.”

“Perhaps he was just making it up for me,” I said.

“No,” answered the other. “If he told you that his father as a lad saw Oliver Goldsmith, it’s so. Old Cormac is a straight man.”

MR. YEATS AND OTHERS

CHAPTER XXIX

1

At the Dublin station, a man was waiting for me—a producer of plays whom I had met at “A. E.’s.”

“Do you know ‘Mac’ who makes caricatures for the Dublin papers?” he asked.

“No, but I’ve seen and like his work.”



A Dublin artist, by “Mac”

“*Her* work,” corrected the producer. “He’s a woman. I’ve been ordered to deliver you, dead or alive to Lower Baggot Street to have your picture made.”

So, nothing interfering, we took a tram to Lower Baggot Street, and came into a house and into a studio, the walls of which were hidden by pen portraits of the famous and infamous, drawn naïvely with sudden lines and an intuitive knowledge of character which approached genius. Then "Mac" came in, a tall woman with dark, keenly-observant eyes who carried about her, even in moments of great seriousness, the capacity for laughter. And (though this does not happen frequently) it was only a few moments later that we found ourselves standing alone—in spite of the presence of the show man—at the beginning of a friendship which was to last beyond the farthest shores of Ireland.

As we prepared to go to the Arts Club for luncheon, I saw upon the walls of the studio the drawing called *Chim Angles* which appears at page 304.

"Do you like it?" asked the lady, knowing perfectly well that I liked it, and enjoying my mirth.

"*Like* it! It's one of the best things of the kind I've ever set eyes on! I've met 'A. E.,' but have only seen William Butler Yeats distantly in a top hat at the Tailteann Games. I'll have to take your word about his looking like that."

"No you won't."

"Why not?"

"Because he and Mrs. Yeats are coming with us to luncheon at the Arts Club."

2

"Which," inquired Mr. Yeats addressing the ceiling, "is the gentleman who is traveling with a donkey?"

But no answer came from on high; so Mac, after an appropriate moment of waiting, designated the individual in

question. "Ah," said Mr. Yeats. Another moment of waiting followed, temporally no longer than the other, but psychologically quite long enough. "Let us go in," said "Mac" brightly.

At first there was talk of the Tailteann Games, their scope and their success. The producer told of one of the contestants, a young chap who had reduced his pole vaulting to a mathematical formula. He vaulted by the numbers. It was astonishing and interesting. We were interested and astonished. Some one else spoke about the distinguished visitors at the Games, or perhaps about the absence of some of them. Mr. Yeats remarked that he had written the invitations but that many had never been answered. D'Annunzio, for one, had not answered his. It was likely, of course, that D'Annunzio received hundreds of letters a day.

"And probably the recent temple services in his villa garden keep him busy."

"Incidentally, that is very good press agent material," said the producer.

"The papers say that he never opens his mail anyway," remarked some one else.

Mr. Yeats smiled understandingly. "I have reached a point where I do not answer letters either," he said. "It becomes more and more difficult to find time in which to work. When I went down to London recently to write, Mrs. Yeats opened all my letters here, and sent on only three important ones. Three."

"But a hundred unanswered letters would prey on my mind," said "Mac." "They would do things to the subconscious."

Yes, perhaps so. That was a great subject, the subconscious.

"Our subconscious mind will eventually be proved to be of a mathematically precise nature. It is possible for the subconscious mind to do that, which, to the conscious mind would be an impossibility. For example, the hand under its influence can draw freehand, a mathematically exact circle duplicating another circle. But if you were to force it, it would lose its authority. If you were *asked* to draw the circle you couldn't do it." Often the subconscious had the power of prophecy about it, too. A man in London had been telling Mr. Yeats about his financial troubles. Quite offhand the poet had replied, "Don't worry about it. Some one will come from America in six weeks and make it all right." And that was exactly what took place. Some one *had* come from America and made things all right!

A phenomenon like that was either explained by memory or by pre-view. A man going into the Underground in London, presumably for the first time, might feel that he had been there before. He might really have been there before and have forgotten, or he might have come there in a dream . . .

"But which side do you take, Mr. Speakman, in the recent trouble in China?"

(O good Lord, Mr. Yeats, which side do *I* take? That's so, I *did* write a book about China once. Wu Pei-fu, Tao Kun, Sun Yat-sen . . . Just hold off a moment and let me see which side I do take.)

Fortunately we turned quite quickly to the matter of opium. He was rather curious as to the effect of opium, and I explained my own reactions to it. He had never smoked opium, he said, but had tried mescal and hasheesh. With hasheesh, after he had looked into the shadow of a curtain, he could see colors *taking form* there. He had wondered

how colors could take form, but on analysis, he found that they really had form. When he pressed his finger tips together getting physical sensation, the color would change.

So, with anecdotes and problems and speculations on the occult, the luncheon continued pleasantly to the coffee and Benedictine. Now Mr. Yeats must get back to his work. Today had been an exception. He almost never went anywhere to luncheon. We said good-by to him, and to the charming lady who is Mrs. Yeats. We returned to the studio. It was then, of course, that a second luncheon began.

3

For the sake of sanctuary, we will designate the speakers as Voices. Thus the second repast also becomes occult.

Voices:

"Do you think he enjoyed his lunch?"

"I certainly do."

"I wonder whether he and Mrs. Yeats heard me when we came into the club."

"Why, what did you say?"

"We were late, you know, but they weren't in sight so I said, 'Not here yet, *thank goodness*.' Then I lifted the curtain—and there they were, just inside!"

"Tell me, why his manner? What is the reason for such terrific pose?"

"It isn't pose, it's the man."

"He believes in pose. He tells young poets to acquire pose."

"Was he bored, or what?"

"No, he is different if he is bored. Besides, I can tell by Mrs. Yeats whether he is bored or not."

"I'd hate to have him for an enemy!"

"I don't agree with you at all. I think it would be an asset to have him for an enemy. When a man of his strength shows enmity, it immediately draws sympathy for the other side."

"I am sensitive to that man."

"So am I, and I admit it."

"That is more than I am. I absolutely refuse to be awed by people."

"I can't talk naturally before him. Never could. Don't know why at all. Can't tell you . . ."

"What remains in my mind is the beauty of his English—the English of a great poet and a true intellectual modified to fit the intellectual requirements of his listeners."

"Thanks!"

"Thanks!"

"Never mind, I am including myself too!"

"His eyes are strange, aren't they?"

"Yes; but I'm a coward. I always draw him with glasses. One ought to do his eyes only one way—like this:



"Speaking technically, there is a flat plane above the bridge of his nose near his forehead. Only the right lens of his glasses is bifocal and——"

"Enough, enough, lay off MacDuff!"

"He is very susceptible to his audience, isn't he?"

"Right-o! 'I am Sir Oracle; when I speak, let no dog bark.'"

"By the way, H. S.—when you sit by a distinguished guest, *don't* put up your elbow on the table for protection between!"

"It wasn't for protection. I was trying to make a lever of my arm to get as near as possible, for he spoke in a rather low voice."

"It looked to me like protection."

"On my word of honor, it was not!" (See page 342)

"He doesn't say good-by when he leaves, does he?"

"No. Just as in a play, you never say, 'He went out.' It is simply, 'Exit, William Butler Yeats.'"

"He makes a jolly good exit too."

"That exit today could have very well been the end of a play."

"It was. A very pleasant comedy."

4

Shortly after the last chronicled event, Dublin began to act very badly. It resolved itself into a series of gay, undulating, pulsating waves upon which ideas bobbed and frisked with no more continuity of linear action than so many champagne corks. Under the circumstances, there was nothing to do but let them frisk.

I met a man who said that his family rents two thousand acres from the Duke of Argyle, and that the yearly rent is a fatted calf and a snowball in the middle of June.

I heard of a Dublin dog named Riley who enjoyed biting men but not women. When a pronouncedly masculine lady in a short skirt and brogues came by one day, Riley—perhaps a little astigmatic—made the perfectly understandable mistake of biting her on the leg. When her feminine squeak showed him his error, he retired in a state of real distress; and a little later (no doubt in a very contrite spirit) made up

for his blunder by pushing an old gentleman with a long beard into a show window filled with razors.

I heard of a man, Senator Oliver Gogarty, a Dublin surgeon who operates with great finesse on Dublin's funny-bone. Senator Yeats, it was said, came into the Tailteann Committee rooms with head and thoughts high in the air, looking into the ether far above his fellows; whereupon Senator Gogarty muttered through his teeth, "Visibility very low today!"

I saw the Cathedral of St. Patrick and the grave of Dean Swift at the base of a pillar by the south door with a brass plate to mark the spot where he was buried at midnight, and another brass plate over the place where his Stella had been buried seventeen years earlier.

It was on the door of St. Patrick's that Swift, when newly appointed had read:

"This place he got by wit and rhyme
And many ways most odd,
And might a bishop be in time
Did he believe in God."

Near the shell of the Four Courts which was gutted during the Easter Rebellion in 1916, I saw St. Michan's Church, much of which was built by the Danes. The organ is still here upon which Händel first played *The Messiah*. It is so old that the ivory keys have been worn through to the wood under the touch of innumerable fingers.

The vaults under the church have a wonderful power of preserving the bodies in them without decomposition. In 1649, the abbess of St. Mary's Church not far away was a

member of the Ormond family, whose enemies wanted information as to the hiding place of James, Duke of Ormand. The abbess was put to the torture. First one hand was cut off, then the other, then both feet, but she refused to disclose her kinsman's place of refuge. Finally, she was killed by having her chest slit open. Her body lies in the vaults. Through the cut in her chest, her lungs may be seen, withered and dry like a blackened bundle of flax.

I saw the Municipal Art Gallery with its very good collection of modern art, and the National Gallery with its distinguished collection of older art. But of all the artists to be met strolling about the National Gallery, the artist one hoped most to meet was not there, and that was Mr. James Stephens, the Registrar, whose medium is the English language, and who paints in it with rare beauty.¹ But he was away for two weeks in Paris and was not expected back before I left Dublin; so I had to content myself with inquiring about him from one of the guards.

"He is a gallant man," said the latter. "To see him or to speak with him, you'd think he was just the ordinary. He came here to the Gallery about '15, and it was about the time Sir Hugh Lane went down in the *Lusitania*. He came in then carrying out the duties of Registrar and he has been here ever since.

"Some of the biggest wigs going, call on him and dine with him frequently. He is a heavy smoker but does not in-

¹ James Stephens was born in Dublin in 1882. "A. E." who first discovered the high quality of Stephens' poetry, found him working as a clerk and assisted him to come forward to the place where he belongs. His prose works contain a remarkable blending of whimsicality, phantasy and imagination. Those who do not know his volume, *The Crock of Gold* should immediately put down this book and go out and purchase it. (P. S. The writer does not know James Stephens.)

dulge in alcohol. He is a great lover of dogs and cats. I never saw him pass a dog that he wouldn't stoop down and pat him, and the same with childer. He is a gallant little man."



James Crock of Gold Stephens

I met a tall lad, fine and straight, with a smile like a Kerry girl, named Paddy Fleming. He had been known far and wide for being the most incorrigible prison breaker among the Republicans.¹ The prisons simply were not made which would hold him. He was also chief of the third eastern division of the Republican army, and he told me something more of little Billy Whalen in Tralee.

"Did Billy tell you," he asked, "about the night of the clogged gun? One night, somewhere in Kerry, Billy was sent out with a couple of fellows on outpost duty. Everything looked the way it shouldn't be, of course, and some

¹ Later, I met a man in the south of Ireland who said, "Fleming's prison work was almost psychic. He stood on his head and broke a window with his feet to get a bit of glass to rip open his straightjacket—this when he had been seven or eight days on hunger strike."

shadows ahead of them seemed to be moving. 'It's the enemy advancing,' said Billy and sent the others to give the alarm. Well, they came back soon, but no one was there, not even Billy himself. They looked for him among the bushes and in a break of briars where he might have been, but no Billy.

"An hour later, he came creeping into camp with his shattered rifle in his hand, looking very shaky.

"What really happened was that something had advanced across the field—a cow most likely—and Billy, in the excitement of the moment, had fired his old rifle, which burst, knocking him out completely. But no such undramatic explanation for Billy Whalen.

"'It was the enemy,' he said. 'My God, the Republic hasn't a chance in the world with them! They fired a shot *right into the barrel of my gun!*' "

I met a man who called the Republican trouble in Ireland, "a tribal squabble." I met a Republican who said that it had been worse than the Great War (in which, however, he had not participated).

"The fighting here," he said, "was more demoralizing than the other because you were on your own initiative. What you did might be all right or it might be all wrong. In the Great War, you were a bit of grist in a big machine and you knew it, but here sometimes the success of your side rested on your own responsibility. A fight among three men is morally worse for those three men than a fight between thirty thousand. In the Great War, you might have had a sort of abstract pity for the enemy. Here, where you knew your man, you had only hate." ¹

I heard a Dublin man say that the people in the North

¹ For contrasting statement, see last paragraph, page 272.

were thrifty, and there was no doubt about it. He knew an old man in the North who kept ducks, and the old man had a wee lad to take care of them. At night they were kept in a shed, and no duck was allowed the privilege of going out in the morning until it had laid an egg. As each duck laid an egg, the wee lad would immediately let it out to enjoy itself in the open. Presently the ducks understood this, with the result that very soon, every duck laid an egg every day.

I met an old first-nighter at the Abbey Theatre where a new play by Mr. T. C. Murray was being given. He said that the Abbey had earlier been a coroner's court, with slabs for the bodies at the right of the foyer. The Manchester lady, Miss Horniman, who had sponsored the Abbey from its birth in 1904 and financed it through several lean years, had told him that when the dust was first cleared away in the empty building, some of the coroner's old forms and papers had been found there. George Moore, he said, had had nothing much to do with the Abbey, but with the old National Repertory Society of which the Abbey was the child.

There had never been in Ireland, he said, a more astonishing collective genius than that of Synge, Yeats, George Moore, Lady Gregory, "A. E.," Padraic Colum, Seamus O'Sullivan and the others which made up the spark and flame of the Irish Renaissance.

They were a minority, it was true, but they were a minority strong enough to send their light across the world. Did that genius flare out because the hour was so dark? Certainly the hour *was* dark.

"The painters are raving of light and of shade
And Harry the poet of lake and of glade;
While the light of your eyes and your soft wavy form
Suits a poser like me by the hearth bright and warm."

"Give me instead of beauty's bust . . ."

"Girl of the snow neck!—closer to me!"

It was into such a fog as this that the Irish Renaissance cut its clear, narrow path of light.

5

Behind the scenes at the Abbey were Mr. Lennox Robinson of the perennial *Whiteheaded Boy*, Mr. Murray whose vivid *Autumn Fire* was being played, and a brilliant newcomer, Mr. Sean O'Casey who had formerly been a builder's



Sean O'Casey, whose plays fill the Abbey Theatre

helper and whose *Juno and the Paycock* and *The Shadow of a Gunman* had recently taken Dublin by storm.

O'Casey's gift of satire is a rare one—satire of a persistent, unwearying nature which seems particularly to appeal to Abbey audiences, for he fills the house night after night. I found him to be a small young man, hands deep in pockets and head half-hidden in a voluminous cap, from under the peak of which a pair of red eyes peered out above a long nose. A common acquaintance from America introduced us, and at the same time congratulated O'Casey on *The Shadow of a Gunman*. "Wonderful, wonderful! But in God's name, why don't you cut it? You can't get away with a two-act play in New York!" The American ran off to find some one or other, leaving O'Casey and me alone.

"I wouldn't cut the 'Gunman,'" said O'Casey in a deep, rather husky voice, "I wouldn't cut the 'Gunman' for any one—not for God Almighty. New York is a great city and a fine city. But Dublin is a great city too. If they can put on a two-act play in Dublin, why can't they put one on in New York?"

Not being able to answer offhand, I remarked that when I was at Coole, Lady Gregory had spoken very enthusiastically about his work. O'Casey's expression changed and softened under the most appreciative of smiles. "Did she, now? And did you see Coole Park and all? And the room where she works? That's a beautiful place."

"Indeed it is. Are you susceptible to your working surroundings?"

"I am, sure enough. Of course, a man has to do the best he can. I work in a room in a tenement."

But here was Sara Allgood, gay and entertaining in spite of her arduous rôle in the play, and here were many others, with whom we returned to Lower Baggot Street. And if

events in Dublin up to that time had seemed no more substantial than so many bobbing corks, this night was like a bit of froth on a cork itself, with tiny bubbles of conversation bursting all about.

"Do you remember the American première of *The Playboy of the Western World* in Maxine Elliott's Theatre?"

"Do I! Everything was all right until Sean Keogh came out and said, 'And what at all would the Holy Father and the Cardinals of Rome be saying if they heard I did the like of that?'" There was nothing at all about those lines to take offense at, but in spite of that, it was there that the trouble began in the audience—catcalls, hisses, snorts, yowls—heavens!"

"Do you mean to say that the New York audience really made trouble in the wrong place?"

"They did, sure enough! There were lots of Irish in the audience, and they heard that there had been some excitement in Dublin when the 'Playboy' was given, so they decided to have a little excitement themselves, but they picked out the wrong lines!"

"America. That's the first place I was ever called an actorine. Actors and actorines . . . I like America. They spoiled *The Whiteheaded Boy* over there, though. It's easy enough to put too much comedy in a comedy."

"Do you like *Autumn Fire*, Miss Allgood?"

"Very much. It's a good part. But I nearly died at first. And the newspaper men say I am perfectly calm. Calm! I wish they could see my knees!"

"Why don't you play *Sweethearts*, Miss Allgood?" asked an Irish-American.

"What is that?" asked the leading lady a little suspiciously.

"It is a play with a very good love theme."

"We don't make love at the Abbey," she answered with a toss of her head.

Thus the night bobbed along until, quite suddenly, it found itself at rest, and we sat listening profoundly, while Sara Allgood, casting off the fatigue she must have felt, gave reading after reading for our diversion and deep pleasure. I had thought earlier in the evening that her work at the Abbey was strong and sensitive and splendidly true. Now it was clear that in the more difficult task of reading before a few, those excellent qualities were sustained and deepened.

If I was silent on these matters later as we rode home through the empty streets of Dublin, it was because the spell she had woven was not easily nor willingly brushed away. Sara Allgood has forgiven me for that silence, I know. Besides, there is this about it: that there are very few people in the world who will think any the less of a man's estimate of the art of a woman when it is given, not in a taxicab, but alone under a green-shaded reading lamp, three thousand cool, imperturbable, transatlantic miles away.

BLUE HILLS OF WICKLOW

CHAPTER XXX

1

DUBLIN is a city to become very fond of. Rain or shine, en fête or out, disturbed or calm, it quickly finds its way to the inner sensibilities. There is a *tingle* about it, with many more dynamic currents and forces in its atmosphere than the static. One may not be aware just what is happening in Dublin in the way of creative thinking and action, but one is very sure that something is happening.

A keener, more intelligent, more alert crowd is hardly to be found on the streets of any metropolis in the world. To-day it is for the most part an astonishingly good-natured crowd, with a vivid interest in matters of the moment. Curiosity may have killed a cat, but Dublin continues to be a thriving city. If you want to try out Dublin in that respect, take up a position on O'Connell Bridge, lean over the railing and look fixedly down into the River Liffey. The chances are very fair that in ten minutes the crowd which will have gathered will be so dense that vehicles will be impeded and you will be admonished for interfering with the traffic.

The city's interest is altogether well-intentioned. If a Dublin man is ready to laugh at you, he is quite as ready to laugh at himself. One of the perennial jokes of Dublin is an advertisement which appeared in a local paper: "Wanted; two strong young men to work with an Irishman."

There was a man who said to me, "Do you know why

Dublin people are so hospitable? It is because they are so inquisitive!"

I disagreed with him then, and I disagree with him now. The hospitality of Dublin is more basic than its curiosity. If the stranger shows the faintest signs of friendliness, Dublin will hold out her arms.

2

I rose on the morning of September 12th with a sense of depression, for that was the day on which I was to leave the city. The other member of the party, however, after a paradise of oats and rest in the oldest coaching establishment in Dublin, was quite ready for the journey. Through regular exercise in the open, daily brushing, and care over a period of months, she had become the apotheosis of all that was fair in donkeyhood. She was, as the stable man said, "Full of dander." Indeed she would hardly wait for the cart and harness, so keen was she on rousseauing back to the open road.

But at last animate and inanimate were assembled and we started on our way toward the County Wicklow down the streets of Dublin—down the back streets (for after all, we were *not* a traveling circus, in spite of what had been said by the merry young woman of Cork). The good, shabby lads in their carts and on the street corners gave us our direction over Butt Bridge to Great Brunswick Street, and then along the canal to Upper Baggot Street, and finally into Donnybrook Road. There I met a member of the Civic Guard who walked along beside the cart to the end of his beat, regaling me with stories of his organization. The Civic Guard was a neutral body which had been formed by the Free State during the time of the trouble for the pro-

tection of non-combatants and property. Its members carried no firearms and were generally respected and liked throughout the south of Ireland.

"When I first joined up," said he, "and had on the Free State uniform, all new and nicely pressed, a few of us were stepping along quite important-like, when we met with the Countess Markevicz on the street. She said to us, 'Huh! You have everything on but the Union Jack!' We didn't feel so important after that! And there was another lady made a speech and said, 'The Civic Guards are good men, but they ought to study Irish history. Then they would realize the great mistake they have made.'" He looked at me through clear Irish eyes and laughed. "That may be or may not be, just the way you happen to think. A man's got to do what he thinks is right," he said. "Will you have a few apples? I was in an orchard keeping the little boys from taking any—and I took a few meself."

3

There are many pyramidal blue hills to be seen in Wicklow along the road to Enniskerry; but the principal impression of Wicklow is not one of pyramidal blue hills. It is an impression of neat villages and woods and copses after the English manner, with private parks and demesnes and hillside glades all arranged as though by some surperlative landscape gardener for the edification of the human eye. Beyond doubt, Wicklow is the cultivated garden spot of Ireland. Through some peculiar paradox—or perhaps through no paradox at all—I met more beggars in Wicklow than in any other county in Erin.

On a lonely hill beyond Bray I stopped for a minor repair on the cart at a small, ramshackle machine shop where I

met a fiery old genius who assured me that he had an invention for revolutionizing the automobile industry.

"I've an invention in there—wait now— Imagine two motors coming head on toward each other. A runaway, a mismanagement, bad brakes. I've got an invention—listen to this; if those two motors get within two feet of each other, if they even *smell* each other, I can paralyze them like two mummies! I can stop them dead with their engines racing and their carburetors wraithing! Here's where the good of it is: damn a motor car would be allowed on the road without it!" He winked and gave me a tremendous nudge in the ribs.

"There's another man has a plan for stopping a motor car by knocking the magneto out of gear. Flames of heaven! If you knock the magneto out of gear, you're too late! You'll be knocked out of gear yourself!"

"Is the invention completed yet?"

"Not yet—but I'm working on it. I am indeed." He picked up a carburetor needle-valve from the bench. "Look at that thread! Made all by hand! There's seven thousand people in Bray, and I swear to heaven there's not a soul could make a thread like that for love or money. They'd stick their teeth into it and eat it first, and take a long time doing that. The bloody thing about it is that it was done with a hand chaser!"

I was impressed. "Is your machine patented?" I asked.

"O Lord, man! If I had money . . ."

"But if it's a good invention, you ought to be able to get some one to back you. Of course you'd have to take him into your confidence and explain it very thoroughly."

"No!" he said energetically. "I'm an illiterate man. (I can read, certainly, but I'm illiterate.) Somebody would be sure to steal it."

"But you have to trust some one in the world."

"Not me!" he chirped merrily. "I'd rather have that machine die with me! I'll give no man the pleasure of my thoughts and make him a rich man and me a beggarman."

I left this good-natured misanthrope and went on to a great hotel at a crossroad called Newrath—a fine old coaching hostelry with stables for fifty horses, and a panel of glass in one of the front windows bearing the news scratched with a diamond, "J. Dixon slept here, April, 1807." The glass on which it is inscribed is genuinely antique, with unintentional bubbles (which are quite different from the intentional kind) all running in one direction across the surface—for which mishap some apprentice lad, long since departed, no doubt caught a round box on the ear. In the hall there is a copy of a letter written by Sir Walter Scott in which he speaks of lunching there on July 2nd, 1825.

The village of Rathnew, a mile south of Newrath, claims to have enlisted a larger percentage of its men for the Great War than any other town in Great Britain or Ireland. Of six hundred and seventy inhabitants, nearly two hundred and fifty males gave their services to the Allied Armies.

Considering its relatively small population and the marked disinclination among the inhabitants of certain of its districts toward assisting England, Ireland contributed a rather surprising number of men to service in the war. Available records show that during the Great War, 296,000 Irishmen from Ireland, and 300,000 from England and Scotland served in the British Army, while 50,000 were under arms in the Colonial Armies. An American who compiled statistics on the American forces asserts that there were a million Irishmen in the army of the United States!

That brings up the old query, "Do Irishmen enjoy a good fight?" Mr. George Russell does not think so. On the

other hand, Dr. Maginn, a pre-Renaissance literary man makes one of his heroes say, "Picking a quarrel is not hard, thank God, in any part of Ireland." Personally, I saw no violence there, although I found plenty of black eyes and destroyed police barracks and broken bridges.

Among those authorities who have believed that the Irish were not averse to an occasional scrimmage are Pope Adrian IV, Lloyd George, Henry II, Giraldus Cambrensis, John Quincy Adams, Edmund Spenser, Samuel Pepys, H. G. Wells, Sir Walter Scott, John Bright, and W. Shakespeare.

To W. Shakespeare, mention of Ireland was almost synonymous with the stage direction, "Trumpets and alarums."

"From Ireland I am come amain
To signify the rebels there are up."

"So long in his unlucky Irish wars!"

". . . from Ireland coming
Bringing rebellion broached on his sword"

And certainly the Irish veteran who called forth the following comment from his colleen on his return home must have been engaged in some occupation more hazardous than knitting.

"With drums and guns and guns and drums
The inimy nearly slew yer.
My darlin' dear you look so queer—
Johnny I hardly knew yer!

You haven't an arm and you haven't a leg
You're an eyeless, noseless, chickenless egg
You'll have to be put with a bowl to beg—
Johnny I hardly knew yer!"

4

Blackberries were ripe on the Wicklow hedges—so ripe that they made it difficult for the traveler to give full attention to the loveliness of the Wicklow landscape. (Now bravo to the large tame blackberries from the sophisticated bushes of New Jersey and California; and bravo to the small tart blackberries along the hedgerows in Normandy; but bravissimo to the luscious mellow fruit of the sunswept Wicklow hills, for it is the best of all the gentle plunder of the road.) This delicious fruit seemed to be neglected by all passersby but myself—a matter which surprised me considerably, not only because of its excellence, but because of the latent possibilities it contained. For if the truth were only known, a delicious cordial might have been made from a few quarts of those humble berries with more kick in it than a row of Inishmore pampooties.

In this pleasant roadside brigandage I was aided and abetted by Grania, who—now trained to stay at the left of the road ¹—would stop dead while I lingered at an appetizing bush, only to start on for the south of Ireland when she heard my footsteps within three yards of the cart. If at length it became necessary from too many roadside loiterings to walk along a little bent over in the middle, at least there fell upon Grania no shadow of contributive blame. For once the woman was not made to pay.

5

If any one ever says to me, "You went south by the shore road? What a pity! You missed the best scenery

¹ Travel in Ireland, as in England, is at the left of the road. There is an old saw which says: Go to the left and you're right. Go to the right and you're wrong."

in Wicklow!"—then, like the veteran who saw Napoleon, I can proudly raise my head and say, "No, I saw Glendalough!"

Speed, I suppose, is comparative. Grania being weary that day, we had made only sixteen miles in seven hours, but upon arriving at Arklow, I got into a Ford and was driven twenty miles to Glendalough and twenty miles back again in an hour and forty minutes. It was terrific!

The driver was small and grim, with the huge red mustache of a Viking. "You are an American?" he asked.

"Yes," I replied. Without further question, he threw open the throttle.

There are forests near Arklow, forests old and gray and dignified like the forests of Robin Hood. They shot past like groups of pale, slender saplings.

Whiz! "What was that?"

"That was Lord Wicklow's house," said the driver, "and this is the Vale of Avoca. Will you look at your watch? Ten minutes to Avoca. That's pretty good going!"

We tore on past a huge, heather-covered rock with the vivid yellow earth-castings of a copper mine at its base, and into a lovely valley where groves of Irish oak, and fields and thickets and villages lay securely in the lap of the mountains. The driver pulled down his throttle a few notches as we drove on through a village, the pigs and chickens skittering out from before us. "Will you look at your watch? Twenty-four minutes to Rathdrum. That's pretty good going!"

We hurtled down into a dark twisting road shaded by large trees—a road warped and bent as though by some hellishly ingenious artificer in order to see how many kinds of curves he could make in a single linear mile. Oblique roads swooped silently around stone walls, crossroads

popped suddenly from behind huge trees, transverse highways came smashing down steep hillsides and around sharp corners.

"Here's where a charybang turned over and one man's head was cut clean off at the neck—*toot-toot*. What time does your watch say now?"

"You don't have to drive so fast for *me*," I said jovially.

"Oh, that's all right," he answered. "I like it. I'm one of the best drivers in the County Wicklow, and that's why I am where I am—*toot-toot*." (But every time he put down his right hand to toot the horn, he let the car run into the middle of the road.)

Now we passed a small crowd gathered at the edge of the highway, and I caught sight of a fallen bicycle and the bloody face of a young man.

"A rat," said the driver.

"A what?"

"A rat. Most likely a rat ran from the side of the road and he ran over it and fell off. It happens quite often—*toot-toot*." As that sound of the horn cut the air, we hit a few of the middle planks of a wooden bridge. Two seconds later we were at a crossroad thirty yards beyond, with a jaunting-car full of people, like something out of a modern Holbein's *Dance of Death*, coming around an inevitable corner just ahead of us. "Toot," said my driver, and ran full tilt at the car. I drew up my legs and waited for the crash of splintering glass. But by an astounding piece of mental and physical coördination, the jarvey of the jaunting-car slewed his equipage to the side of the road, and we shot past with no more clearance than the width of a school-boy's whisker.

"I told you," said my chauffeur complacently, "that I was a good driver."

6

But here was Glendalough—another jewel of a valley with a surface filigree of gorse and larch and fir, and the curve of an opaline lake glimmering through the dusk, and a graveyard of quiet beauty.

"They are thousands strong in that graveyard," remarked my companion as we took the road back to Arklow. "Many's the funeral I've driven along this road."

I believed him. However, the gentle garment of darkness swung down and closed off the terrors of the way. If my man came near driving at another funeral, neither of us knew it. There was only the night wind in the face, and the flash of wide eyes along the roadside, and the headlights of other motors hissing by like small angry suns between the columns of the old gray trees of Wicklow.

Wonderful trees—those ancient massive veterans of the centuries. They would stop a Ford with hardly a tremor. . . .

But once my feet struck terra firma in front of the hotel, the thought of their bulk no longer carried a feeling of menace but a sense of security. For I knew that if at any time during the rest of my journey I were to hear ever so faintly the familiar *toot-toot* of that motor on the road, Grania and I, without the slightest attempt at dignity would "take to the tall timber."

THE HOME STRETCH

CHAPTER XXXI

1

It was pleasant to find a hotel like the Portsmouth Arms at Enniscorthy being conducted as excellently today as it could have been conducted at any time during the course of its two hundred years. It was pleasant to see before one's eyes the visual proof that a century of polishing and use only makes old furniture the richer. But most of all, it was delightful and enlightening to meet two ladies at the hotel, one with a distinct talent for music, the other with a rare appreciation for books.

At Enniscorthy it came to me very conclusively that scattered all about Ireland there is a small, highly-educated intellectual middle class which does not coincide with the moneyed people nor with the fox-hunting people at all—a class which, quietly living its own life and unobtrusively going its own way, is not often observed by the stranger. Nevertheless, it adds a very necessary leaven to the mind-life of Ireland, and it does not, as one of the ladies at the hotel said of herself, “live to bloom unseen.” For those good and excellent people scattered over the face of Ireland, whose habits of mind force them to a certain solitude, may accept as a rather enheartening certainty the thought that when they sit alone playing Wagner instead of bridge or reading Joseph Conrad instead of some one's palm, they are taking a place with honor in the community life of their

country. There will be shy people at the gate to listen, and there will be those in the library to receive the book. Ireland will grow slowly into its new life, but very surely, just as the United States is growing very slowly but very surely into a new mental life; and there will be an increasing number of those who will look up eagerly toward better things.

2

Through a common friend, I met at Enniscorthy a man named Larry DeLacey, a keen, calm, pipe-smoking chap—a friend of Jack London and Trotzky and de Valera and Upton Sinclair; a man of incisive brain and genial personality, apparently without the rancor and petty peevishness from which so many minor intellectuals seem to suffer. He knew many peoples and languages, including the Japanese. He had been a stormy petrel on the crest of revolution over the world and had been the first man to be “on the run” in Ireland. I imagine he had drunk politics to the dregs and had found them bitter, for he had come out of his adventures with this written very deeply on his mind: that he wanted to have a farm and till the soil—an ultimatum of great soundness which seemed to prove the basic solidity of the man.

I tried off and on during several pleasant hours to get him to tell me something of his adventures, but he refused, jovially contending that whatever had happened was of no consequence to anybody. At last, on my further insisting, he replied, “All right, if you are writing for the Americans, say this: that you met the notorious Larry DeLacey who served a year and a half on McNeill’s Island for helping the German agents von Schlach and von Bopp escape from

Angel Island where they had been interned for breach of the Wilson neutrality program."

I waited, expecting him to add that as an Irish patriot he had aided the enemies of England. But no such explanation came.

"Is that all?" I asked.

"Yes," he said, without any bravado, or pretension, or gesture of defiance.

I took out a pencil and made a note silently to cover my surprise. For one does not meet any excessive number of men in this world, who, though assured of an understanding of the few, will so nonchalantly bring down on their heads the unreflecting disapproval of the many.

3

As the Wee Horse and I went down the early morning highway between Enniscorthy and New Ross, the sun began to shine; and this was so pleasant a variation from the common or garden-hose variety of morning that I felt constrained to lift my voice in song. There was a definite satisfaction in having Grania for an audience, for she was one of the very few of her sex, who, when I burst into song, did not burst into laughter. (I remember one who actually burst into tears!) True, one may know the meaning of cantata, recitative, Vorspiel, diction, bel canto, cadenza, fugue and oratorio. And one may know what it means to be in good voice, or what a prince tenor means, as distinguished from a lyric or dramatic tenor, or one may be able to carry a tune relentlessly—and yet not be able to sing. So on turning an abrupt corner, it was with some embarrassment that I came upon six yeomen all standing in a row leaning on their spades and listening with wonder. Where-

upon the only thing to do was to roar good day to them and stride on, switching the roadside weeds in a carefree manner, but feeling not half so songful as before.

A little farther on, I met another man of the sod standing by the road. He had a six days' growth of beard on his chin, but the light of intelligence was in his eye. When I stopped to talk to him, it was clear that the intelligence was not confined to his eye alone, for he had been the first man in the County Wexford to receive the Irish speaking certificate from the Gaelic League.

He knew Larry DeLacey, and told me that long before the Easter Rebellion of 1916, DeLacey had been caught by the Royal Irish Constabulary with sixty-five rifles, three thousand five hundred rounds of ammunition, and sixty pounds of dynamite in his house but had escaped by turning a handspring out of the window. Then he had bought a through railroad ticket to Waterford but had jumped from the train three miles up the line, and was "on the run" for fourteen weeks, finally escaping to Holland.

"Some people call him a bloody agitator, some people call him a great man," said the bearded one, as Grania, having stood long enough, started of her own volition up the road.

"What do you call him?" I inquired across the lengthening distance.

"Me?" shouted the other. "I call him a bloody great man!"

If New Ross, twenty miles southwest of Enniscorthy were as new as its name suggests, one might fear for its safety; for it clings so precariously to the abrupt sloping bank of the Barrow that it appears at any moment in danger of slipping into the wide river. But New Ross, in spite of its name, has maintained a firm toe hold on the river bank since the 13th Century, adding year by year, the picturesque-

ness of crumbling walls to the panorama of river and wood and palisade-like hills.

As we came up to the hotel, an apologetic, snub-nosed little man with a cheery, self-deprecatory sort of smile and a pair of square-across-the-nose English pince-nez, approached us.

"My name's Delmar," he said in a gentle voice. "I'm an actor, and we're givin' a show at a little place six miles from here. I understand you're travelin' about Ireland, and I thought maybe you might like to see it. We'll be startin' in a motor pretty soon and would like to have you come too."

I was tired, and said so—perhaps not altogether graciously.

"But I don't think you ever saw anything like this before," he went on encouragingly. "There are only four of us. Em'ly—that's my wife; Miss Love, the pianist; Mr. Finn, our Irish speaker; and me. There are only two houses and a hall in the village where we play."

"Is it vaudeville?"

"No," he replied, "it's a drama. Tonight we are givin' *The Wanderer's Return* or *the Tramp's Revenge*."

I went.

4

In the motor he introduced me to the others of the troupe. His wife, Em'ly, was a small, vivacious woman with vivid henna-red hair, except for a sharp, half-inch strip of gray each side of the part, suspiciously excellent teeth, and a sort of feminine softness about her in spite of the indefatigable advance of the years. Miss Love, the pianist, was a cross-eyed, semi-abashed, semi-dignified young woman with

a giggle. Mr. Finn, the "Irish speaker" (Delmar said "Irish speaker" as though he were naming a mechanical part of a radio) was a handsome, strapping lad who was silent on the journey in the very apparent effort to rehearse his lines.

As we drove into the country east of New Ross, the little man explained the nature of their entertainment.

"It's not what you'd call a finished performance," he said. "It can't be. In the last four months, we've done a different play *every night*."

"Good heavens!"

"Yes, it's true. No two performances alike. You see, we stay in a place just as long as the audience keeps comin'. They won't come again if the show is the same."

He explained to me how they achieved this astonishing repertoire. On Sunday, he and his wife and Mr. Finn would copy out the parts from one of a great stack of paper-covered plays which they carried with them, reducing the number of characters in the drama sufficiently so that by taking double or triple rôles, they would be able to carry the action connectedly to its conclusion. "At night, after we are through actin', we just read the play for the next night through, without attemptin' to learn it. Then we have a habit of puttin' our lines under our pillows for the night. We call that 'sleepin' on it.' It's a silly habit, but it seems to help.

"In the mornin' we look over it again and see how much we have remembered. That second swat helps a lot. We rehearse from eleven to one and get our wardrobe out. Then we polish up the lines in the afternoon. By evenin' we're ready."

"All but meself," said the tall Mr. Finn.

"Oh, you do very well now," answered the little man

soothingly. "Mr. Finn has only been with us five weeks," he explained. "It's quite interestin' how he joined the company. I had another man, but he sent a note by Mr. Finn one night half an hour before the performance, sayin' that he was done with us. I was worried, because in the play that night there was to be a fight on the stage between two men and I couldn't do that all alone. So Mr. Finn said to me, 'Is there anything I can do?' We had a few minutes' rehearsal, then he went on. And he has been with us ever since." He's an Irish speaker, too, and sings and dances."

"Are you Irish, Mr. Delmar?"

"No, I'm English, and my wife is Welsh. But Miss Love is Irish. Quite an international troupe."

"Then you haven't always been playing in Ireland."

"No, Em'ly and I were actin' for years and years in England. Then we bought a public house in a minin' district and settled down. But the government changed its policy and all the miners moved away; so we had to give it up and come on the road again."

We arrived at the village where the performance was to take place. It consisted, as the actor had said, of two houses and a little hall which was corrugated iron outside and matched pine boards within—probably a relic of the war. There was a tiny stage, and a curtain with an Irish round tower painted on it. Three long boards, covered with green cloth and supported at each end by chairs, made the reserved seats. Behind them were four benches of rough wood. A place on the benches cost nine pence, on the cloth-covered boards, a shilling. Though it was half past eight when we arrived, there was no sign of an audience.

Delmar and Em'ly disappeared behind the curtain. Miss Love sat strumming airs on an incredibly out-of-tune piano.

I helped Mr. Finn fill and light three kerosene lamps, which with their tin reflectors, shone brightly on the curtain. The voices of the actor and his wife came cheerily down to us.

"What are you doin' for your song in the second act?" she asked.

"I'm doin' Illa Walla Walla."

"Oh, don't do that! Sing Hungarian Girl."

"But I haven't shaved, and besides, my tights are home. I'll sing My Bonnie Jean. Miss Love has a copy of it there."

"But you don't know the words!"

"I'll gag 'em. I did that the other night, my dear."

"It was awful. I blushed with shame!"

"You needn't. It's easy enough for a man to sing a song he knows. But to sing a song he doesn't know . . ."

"Brrr! The window's broken. I wonder if any one in the village has some rags."

"Rags, my dear! We're all rags!" And now the little man himself, in a woeful outing costume and brightly painted face—looking more like Pagliacci than any one else in the world—came out saying to me, "Would you like to see our dressin' rooms?" He led the way to a minute curtained triangle at the right of the stage containing two large hampers.

"That is Mr. Finn's dressin' room and mine. The ladies' dressin' room is right at the end of the stage and shut off with the red curtain. It's the only exit from the stage, and when we want to go off stage, we have to whisper, 'Are you changin'?' because when we lift the curtain, the audience would see them."

He foraged in one of the hampers and drew out a stack of paper-covered pamphlets. "There are the plays I spoke

about." I looked at the titles. *A Thief in the Night; Nellie, the Beautiful Cloak Model; The Miser of Chelsea; Camille*. But *Camille* was not the sort of play one expected to find in repertoire in Ireland. "We don't use the name *Camille*," said Delmar. "We call it *Nana, the Beauty of Paris*. Here's our poster I had printed. It has a place, you see, where I write in the date.

"Special Visit," read the poster. "Len Delmar presents the Irish-American Bijou Bazaar Company in Dramatic Plays, featuring the latest American Songs, Sketches & Burlesques. Admission nine pence and one shilling."

"It *was* six pence and one shilling," said the actor, "but I had to make it nine pence and one shilling on account of the motor bringin' us from New Ross. That motor is takin' the gilt off the gingerbread."

5

A few rough-looking yokels began to drift in, and now the little man with straw hat, winter overcoat, and ludicrous paint went to a small table beside the door to take in the admission fees. From my seat before the flaring lamps I could hear the henna-haired woman laughing with the Irish lad behind the scenes. Harlequin, Columbine, Pantaloon. What a setting here for a novel, with the cross-eyed Miss Love tinkling through the plot on that unspeakable piano.

Now the audience was complete—eight men, ten women, three children and four dogs. These people had trudged through the darkness two, three, four miles to see the show. A little girl came and sat beside me on one of the cloth-covered planks, but a white, long-haired dog of setter type with a really horrible smell squeezed in between us and

looking into my eyes in a most callow, sentimental manner, laid its head on my knee; while two small black dogs—by no means without atmosphere—took up their station at each side of me on the floor. The fourth dog, as though guided by fate, went directly to that spot below the stage where Mr. Finn was to step an hour later when carrying a set of spoons to the winner of a raffle.

So the drama began—something about mistaken identities and a convict who was the father of the heroine—and now the little man was looking the Irish speaker in the eye and saying, “Where have you bean, and what have you bin doin’, curse you! You are the h’man I have bin h’waitin’ for! I’ll do your work because I’m forced to do it. But God forgive me if anything happens to that inno-cent young girrrrl!”

Mr. Finn, having been at it only five weeks, and having to act both tragedy and comedy parts, did not quite know when he was “heavy” and when he was “light.” So he played his tragedy with a touch of comedy and his comedy parts with a touch of tragedy which made them both a little unhappy. But he was a likable lad with a quick wit, a trainable voice, and active limbs. When he finished his clog dance at the end of the first act, a heavy feminine voice behind me said, “Well, be the devil, he has the use of himself!”

Then Delmar came forward with a small box in his hand.

“While we’re restin’ there’ll be a raffle,” he said. “Here’s half a dozen silver teaspoons in a case. Each spoon is marked by the maker. The tickets are three pence.” A few moments later the spoons had been lost and won, and then it was that Mr. Finn, advancing heavily past the footlights, stepped on the dog who filled the corrugated iron shed

with such an outlandish yowling that the audience, drawn out of itself by the bond of humor, began to talk.

"Where are you going at all?" said a woman to a little boy behind me.

"Nowhere, just," said he.

"And when you get there, will you give me a boo-kaya?"

"A what?"

"A boo-kaya. A flower."

"No."

"Then I'll kill yer when you come down fer water at the pump!"

"You won't indeed!" (Laughter. "Mind that! You won't indeed!")

"I will indeed. And when you get home, your mother will blame yourself for it. You ought to do away with her and get another woman altogether!"

But the answer was lost in the complaint of a swarthy man in front of me talking to his neighbor. "Ain't it lovely? The price of pigs is fallin' and the foodstuff goin' up. Sure nobody can compete with the likes of that!"

"Not even St. Patrick himself," agreed the other.

6

Now the second act was over, and the recitations and dances and sketches which followed it, and we were in the motor again driving back to New Ross. There was a pleasant sense of relaxation. The troupe talked freely of earlier experiences. Delmar and Em'ly had worked for eight months in one cinema house near Dublin, furnishing dialogue for the pictures. Em'ly took all the women's parts, he took all the men's. They stood behind the screen and looked at the pictures from the back, seeing all the cap-

tions in reverse. The speaking was done almost impromptu, and sometimes they made mistakes. For example, a woman was shown in the picture watching for some one out of the window, and Em'ly speaking for her said, "There is Henry now! I can see him coming up the street. How tired he looks, poor man!" Then, much to Em'ly's consternation, a little child came tripping into the picture, and Em'ly had to say, "Ah, me little dearie, where is your pappa? I saw him on the street a minute ago, he must have gone into a pub!"

They had had other duties at the cinema house too—duties which included the sounding of whistles, the making of horses' hoof-beats, cries, shots, thunder, and the patter of rain. There was an old Englishman who came night after night listening to their dialogues and improvisations. One night he stopped and told them how much he enjoyed their work.

"Which part do you like best?" they asked with a thrill.

"It's the beating of the 'orses 'oofs," he said.

7

"How did you come out tonight?" I inquired of the little man when the others were talking.

"Well—we're pretty badly out of pocket. It's the motor and the hall that makes it expensive. With the raffle money, we took in twenty-three shillin's altogether; but the hall cost ten and the motor cost ten. We had twenty-three shillin's last night, and thirty the night before. If we could have got lodgin's in the village we would have made it all right; or better, we should have bought a caravan to begin with. Em'ly and I have been out of pocket now, for seven weeks."

I hardly knew what to reply, but he added cheerfully, "We're hopin' it will come out all right. We just want to make enough so we can buy some clothes and play the towns. Of course, we're gettin' older too. We'd like to settle down some time . . ."

The motor turned into the town and I caught a glimpse of the little man's profile with its ridiculous, up-turned nose and all the machinery of his glasses against the sky. But the Dramatic Player with his Songs, Sketches & Burlesques was gone. Here was only a human being—and here was tragedy.

The following letter has recently come to me from London. It is added to this page, not so much as a footnote, but as a short, poignant commentary on courage.

H. S.

15/3/'27

Variety Artists' Federation
18 Charing Cross Road
London, W. C. 2

Harold Speakman, Esq.

Sir:

The Comedy is ended, Emily is dead.

I want to thank you for coming to the show that night, you made Emily happy for the last remaining period of her life. You see, we were not always playing in the "back of beyond." At the time you met us, Emily was dying. She received a shock through an air raid in London which shattered her nerves and left her with a gradually failing heart.

On my discharge from the army, I found a changed woman, and it became necessary to decide whether I was to devote myself to her or my career. I chose the former, and I've never regretted it. I asked you that night in order to give her pleasure, and when she was dying, she spoke of you and was glad that her memory would be perpetuated through your book. You were right in thinking you scented a tragedy.

At present, I am just jogging along, but I may make an effort to recover some of the neglected chances, I am not very old as regards years. If I have bored you forgive me, some impulse possessed me to write. I have no friends or relatives interested in me. I am just alone.

Wishing you every success in life,

I am yours faithfully,

Signed: Lewis L. Greenwood
(Lon Delmar)

THE DEAR DARK GIRL

CHAPTER XXXII

1

"THE UNCONQUERED CITY" is a proud title for any municipality; and the city of Waterford well merited that appellation when, about 1496, Perkin Warbeck, the Pretender came "with drums and guns and guns and drums" and no honorable intentions at all as far as Waterford was concerned. Shortly after its successful defense, the city was yclept "*Urbs intacta manet Waterfordia*" by Henry VIII, and became very proud.

But where there is so much pride, it just simply becomes necessary to go snooping around to see whether there wasn't some kind of a fall too. It is pleasant for Waterford's sake, and for the sake of the humanities, to find that once in the long ago, the city yielded to the cave-man tactics of a doughty gentleman named Strongbow and at a later time to the blandishments of General Ireton of Cromwell's forces.

At the end of the wide, waterside street along the River Suir is an old tower which probably dates from the 10th Century and which was built by the Dane, Reginald the Ostman. The tower is the most interesting monument in the city. To me, it is doubly interesting, for on the turreted roof of the tower, I opened a package which had been forwarded by post from Dublin containing a letter and a book.

2

DEAR H. S.:

Seven-thirty A. M., "bright and clear," and I am sitting

up in bed armed with a fountain pen and a block of paper. (A fountain pen, a telephone, a sense of humor—three Real Essentials. Non?)

I feel really regretful about two things when we last met: first, in having burdened you so much about my work, secondly, about a look of real physical weariness in your face which I ignored. I know you said that your "chassis was built for punishment"; nevertheless . . . I cry *mea culpa* at the top of my voice for having had no mercy on you, simply because I am so tremendously an admirer of Sara Allgood's work that I did want you, just as tremendously, to realize the delightfulness of her art. Her song-recitations bring that home more quickly than anything else.

So now you will see why I behaved like a brute to both of you. You too will have to say, "it's all right," as Miss Allgood did!

Lennox Robinson of *The Whiteheaded Boy* had an awfully nice party last night, a dinner with bridge, music and dancing afterward. It was a great time and I enjoyed it immensely. All the Dublin notables were there including about a dozen of my cartoon-victims who threatened to throw me out of the window so as to rid the world of me. Major Bryan Cooper proposed it and Cruise O'Brien and Sir John O'Connell seconded it. William Butler Yeats opposed it on the ground that there would be flare-lines in the *Independent* next morning! He—W. B. Y.—was in great form, so I told him about you and your elbow. He hadn't even noticed it and said—[censored]. So I'll have to alter my proposed book of etiquette as follows: When lunching with Distinguished Poets, DO put your elbow on the table.

I made a rough sketch of The Elbow the other day and took it over to Trinity Hall this afternoon. They seemed to think it amusing, so I'll finish it and send it along. René Bull, the French caricaturist, was here from Paris, and liked it too.

1:30 A.M. A telegram has just come saying that my friend M., the American novelist, is coming over to Dublin from England tomorrow. He is the man whom Stephen Mackenna spoke about in his letter. James Stephens was here with some other people until about half an hour ago. We had a great evening of talk. I don't know when I have heard James Stephens talk so well. I am to tell you that the inscription he wrote in the book is a direct translation from the Irish.

As I read your letter, H. S., I thought what absurd significance a crossed-out line in a letter sometimes assumes. The words, "This is the only letter I am writing to Dublin tonight" are followed by the three crossed-out words, "for this room——"

What a variety of rooms you must have seen on your journey, and what a lot they must tell you about the people who own them! That crossed-out sentence is haunting me because it opens such a sea of possibilities. I think you must have known that the erasure would make your letter even more living than if you had completed the sentence to read, "for this room *is full of wild elephants*. (That certainly would have been a valid excuse for not writing any more letters in it!) Still, even that would have presented concrete facts—those iron barriers to imagination. As it is, the room might be *anything!*

A man who has relatives in County Clare told me of an unpleasant adventure you had with the MacM——s, the

tinker clan, I am wondering if it is true at all, or how much of it is. I hope, for the credit of Ireland, that it was not as rough an experience as it sounded when my friend told me about it.¹

Dear me, H. S., I find it very difficult to close. I feel a real pang of regret at sending this last letter you will receive from me in Ireland. I wish we had the assurance that you would come back here and settle down. M., the novelist I spoke of, has been drawn here as by a magnet and is coming to Dublin with his wife and son to live. Come along and let's start a happy colony; and as for the donkey, she must be reclaimed from whatever home you find for her. When we know you are returning, we'll all subscribe and buy her back, and we shall all meet you on the quays, she wearing a bright banner which says, "Welcome, O Wanderer."

And so I reach the end. I send you some cuttings from

¹I had had no unpleasant adventure whatsoever with tinkers, so later I wrote to Dublin asking for a detailed account of my troubles. This will serve to show the astounding speed with which legends grow up in Ireland:

It appears that I arrived late one evening at a big common in the County Clare which the tinkers use as a headquarters when they are not following their profession along the roads. On reaching this camping ground, I saw no one about so I drove in, put up my tent (?), tethered the donkey, and fell asleep. About two in the morning the MacM——tinkers, who had been absent at a fair, came home again. On seeing an intruder on their common they became enraged, pulled down the tent and asked me what the hell I was doing there.

"He tried to explain that he did not realize the common was theirs, but before he could say 'knife' they had torn tent and bedding into shreds, smashed everything breakable, beat the donkey and assaulted him so badly that he lay unconscious until morning."

To authenticate all this, it was added that in the morning I went to the Civic Guard Station to make a report, but the Guards felt that discretion was the better part of valor in dealing with the MacM——tinkers. "Better leave well alone," they said to me!

God bless the Irish imagination!

the papers and Chesterton's lines on a donkey, which you may or may not know. Good luck. God keep you . . .

.

The book which accompanied this letter bore this signature:



Not being told what it was, one would puzzle a long time before one read—James Stephens!

3

If you will look again at the endpapers of this book, you will see that the distance between Waterford and Dungarvan is too great to be done by a donkey in a single day's rain—especially if that donkey's name is Grania. (In the rain, give me preferably a good enterprising turtle!)

Grania! What an animal! The more it rained, the slower she went, and the slower she went, the more she ate. Her Christian name may have been Grania, but what she responded to most readily was Oats. Miss Grania Oats, Cork. Instead of Grania, Granary would have been far, far better.

In spite of her usually quiet manner, there was that which made me think she did not always behave with decorum on my absence. When I had rejoined her in Sligo after that first week in Dublin, she had what looked very much like a black eye. At Antrim, when I returned from Belfast, I

found that she had got herself a bump on the nose which made her profile aquiline, for a full week.

It is my opinion that she brought these things upon herself. For example, during a hectic night at Skerries, north of Dublin, she unlocked the stable door; unfastened the canvas cover of the cart; opened her own box and ate half a stone of oats; opened the tin pantry, unwrapped a loaf of raisin bread and ate it; ate six apples; then took the paper and string off three ancient volumes by Oliver Goldsmith entitled *'An History of the Earth and Animated Nature'*, dropped them in the mud and was apparently reading about Crustaceous Fishes when I came into the stable yard. At that moment, it was very easy to understand how another mortal less attached to her than her master might have hit her unthinkingly with the nearest available object—probably the cart.

4

But as we trickled moistly into the little village of KilmacThomas sixteen aqueous miles beyond Waterford, no thought save that of mutual shelter impinged upon our sodden consciousness.

Beyond the bridge, a rather officious youth in the uniform of the Civic Guard stopped us.

"What have you in the cart?" he asked.

"My personal baggage."

"Are you hawking?"

"No."

"Have you a license?"

"No. I'm on a holiday."

He looked at me so suspiciously through the rain that it became necessary to tell him a few of the whys and wherefores. Whereupon he warmed up considerably and said

that although there was no hotel and it was the devil's own town to get accommodations in, he would do his best to find me "digs."

Shortly, I found myself in a room with two beds in it, one of which belonged to the village postman, who at that moment was sitting in his *incroyables* on the edge of his bed. "I'm goin' around in me figure because me clothes are drowned," he explained.

"That's a fine bit of a club you've got there," said the Civic Guard eyeing a blackthorn I was carrying.

"Yes, it was given to me in Dublin. It has a very good color, they say."

"Why don't you give it to *me*?" he asked.

"Give it to you?" I repeated in some surprise, for that sort of thing was very far from the habit of the Guards. "I'll think about it."

"You'll think about it?"

"Yes!" I answered quite militantly; so with a final look at the stick, he subsided. We had a drink and he went off to his duties at the other end of the village.

"Bedad, you're in luck to find a bed at all," said the postman. "This is a wicked place for lodgings. Before I could find a room here I was six weeks idle in Waterford. A lad who was working on the railroad left last week, and you have his bed. He was a good lively lad too."

He had good reason to be a good lively lad. I have never found more fleas in any bed this side of the east coast of the Mediterranean.

5

But to know the woman of the house was compensation even for that. She was one of those women of the people—of which type I have already spoken—calm, gray-haired, the

mother of five or six children, with a vast simplicity and a vast amount of common sense. We sat talking until late before the coal fire in the bare little living room.

Her husband had been in America twelve years. Her youngest child, who was also twelve, had been only five weeks old when her husband left. The woman had not seen the man since.

"It just happened," she said. "It just happened from day to day—like your journey over Ireland. If I had known when he left that it would be so long, I don't think I'd be here at all. Often when the boats come into Cobh, they bringing thousands with them, I think, 'Oh, if Paddy were on that boat . . . !'

"But he must be changed by now. All these years. It's fifty-eight he is, and when a man turns sixty, I think he'll be feeling in his bones to go back to the place where he was born. He's a good man, is Paddy. Never a long time goes by without a letter with money; or if no money, a letter."

There was a large vertical iron wheel beside the fireplace connected with bellows which in turn opened upward through a flat grating in the hearth under the fire. She turned the wheel, and the air rushed up through the grating. The fire glowed a sullen red. Sparks and smoke seethed strangely upward from the flat hearthstone. It looked like the floor of a little hell, I said.

"It does indeed. What a terrible thing to think that some poor souls might go there forever and ever with the heat gushing up all around. . . . Sure I don't believe it. It might be for a while that we'd get punishment. But not forever. I don't believe . . .

"It's a strange thing what's waiting for us. Sometimes I think that it is all decided like, beforehand. What I don't understand is, when a little child dies."

"Some of the people in Asia," I said, "think that each of our lives is a link in a chain. When a child dies, they say that the chain needs a small link between two of the larger links."

"Now that's a queer and strange idea," she said. "It might be true."

We sat for a time in silence, then she went on, "There is a story I heard when I was a little girl, about a girl who went out and stood by a brook. And she said to the brook (it was a child's story like), 'How old you must be, running through so many years.' And the brook said, 'Ah yes, that's true. Once your great-grandmother was standing exactly where you are standing, and she looked exactly like you.' It made me think that perhaps the little girl was her great-grandmother living over again."

"And I remember a picture in a little house near the mill, of four generations of women. A little one was at play, and her mother—a stout, strong girl—was working with the one next older; but the great-grandmother was very feeble and the little one was leading her. And all about the edge of the picture, it showed how the little girl too had become a great-grandmother; and so it went on and on. It's all very strange in this world. . . ."

So we too went on talking and pondering about mysteries of which no living man knows any more than she or I; and there was an understanding, an intimacy about it which she must have felt also, for she said, "It's queer now, how some folks could sit here the whole evening and never be two minds alike about anything at all."

But for all this seriousness, she was not lacking in the national quality of flashing perception. When I took the road in the morning, minus one very good blackthorn stick,

and called out in leaving, "Tell the Civic Guard I was sorry to miss him when he called," the last sound that I heard from Kilmacthomas was the sound of her laughter coming up the breeze.

6

South of Dungarvan loomed highlands such as I had not seen since the day of that terrific coast road between Ballycastle and Cushendall. A heathery plateau spread over the tops of the hills, and a keen wind, filled with the babble of small cold rivulets, smote in our faces bringing even the Wee Horse to tears. Beyond the farther edge of the plateau the Irish Sea—deep ultramarine under a cobalt sky—rose almost vertically to a sharp horizon, with a dark ribbon of itself running inland between the wooded sides of a broad, benevolent valley. Miles away, at the far side of this band of water, clustered the tiny, three-dimensional blocks and cubes and castellations of a venerable town, with sailing vessels lying off the quays, where in the year 1580, galleas and captured corsair and battered galleon swung and groaned in the freshening wind.

It was then that the good mayor of the town, made restless by the deep voice of the sea booming beyond the outer strand, would drop his quill pen, light a rough cylinder of *tobacco* and go out into the garden beside his many-gabled house to see how his *potatas* were coming along. ("God's death, Patrick—a jaune-ribbed bug with stripes of black doth crawl on the potato! And this happens again, I'll have ye flayed alive, marry, I will—an' my name's Walter Raleigh!")

Now the road left the plateau and ran upstream along the wide ribbon which was the Blackwater, turned sharply to

the left across a low-lying bridge, turned left again down the other bank, and so into the long, meandering street of the old town of Youghal, pronounced Yawl.

It is a quaint town, lying partly on the sea, partly along the Blackwater, which is sometimes called "the Irish Rhine." Raleigh's house, "Myrtle Grove," is still in good condition, and there is a 16th Century church in Youghal founded by one, Richard Bennett, whose remarkable antique effigy lies in state beside that of his wife. If those two square-hewn, cube-featured indescribabilities in stone were transported to the Quartier Latin, I think that they would at once become models for a group of sculptures which would make a cubist exhibition look like a row of cream puffs!

According to the Registrar General's report, Youghal is the most healthful town in Ireland. That information is confirmed in the little local guidebook by a gentleman who carries after his name the initials, M.D., M.Ch., F.R.C.S., Eng. (What microbe would have a chance against that!) Great numbers of people come here from Cork during the summer, says the little book. From Cork, yes. And then one realizes with a strange throb and twist that Cork and the end of the journey are only twenty-six miles away.

7

I have said that I thought I knew Grania. What a fool a man is! But Grania knew me! She knew every tone of the voice—every command, every *tchik*, every "get-up!", every "good donkey," every change of inflection;—each of which for the first few times in the long ago had stirred her to a momentary effort beyond that of her slumberous two-and-a-half miles an hour. She knew most thoroughly that when we came into a town, there would be no complaint

whatever on my part, no matter what snail's pace she assumed, and certainly no castigation—for that would have given the imaginative townspeople the impression that I had been belaboring her from one end of Ireland to the other.

So as we came up the long sunlit road by the River Lee toward Cork, I thought, "In another minute or two she'll be slowing down to her usual city gait"—(a pace so nearly akin to a state of complete rest that on more than one occasion, funeral processions had flashed by us with a speed positively cosmic).

But no. She did nothing of the kind! Instead of lessening her pace, she increased it! Of her own volition, she increased it! Why? Heaven only knows. Perhaps she recognized her native sod. Perhaps she wanted to create one final, scintillating impression. If that were her object, she achieved it. When I close my eyes even now, I can see her pegging along, her small feet raised sharply in air, her raincape flying like that of a circus charioteer, as she marched magnificently, victoriously back into the cloudswept city of Cork.

Now the young woman lying under the hedgerow lifted up her head. And it seemed to me that during the time of the telling of this tale there had come upon her a greater loveliness than before. Her cheeks were roses not less than the roses of Killarney, and her eyes were deep pools of Connemara wherein brimmed sadness and, in the same moment, laughter.

"Have you found the dear, dark girl who was lost during the wars?" she asked.

Then I answered quickly out of my pride, "I have found many things."

"Tell me," she inquired all at once, "what became of Grania, the donkey?"

"Well, it was plain that I could not take her beyond the western sea," I said; "but there were many people in Cork and in Dublin, and even as far away as Galway and Carrickfergus on the north, who wrote concerning her that they would each become a parent to her. And of these many, I chose one in Fermoy in the County Cork, and sought out the manner of the parentage so that my companion might suffer no ill. And there came a final letter saying, 'She will have every care and a good house, and sufficient work to keep her from brooding on being a donkey.' But for the best part of an hour, I mistook the letter so that it seemed to read: '. . . sufficient work to keep her from brooding on leaving a donkey.'"

And now the young woman put down her head under the hedgerow and laughed aloud with a gay, clear laughter like church bells at a festival in Kerry. And she laughed on until the blood throbbed in her magnificent throat, and the hillside echoed back in answer.

"Who are you?" I asked at last; "who are you, that laughs so long and so gayly?"

"I?" she said. "Why I'm—Ireland!"

THE END

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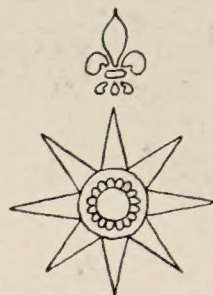
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